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IT'S AN ART

Other books by Helen Woodward

THROUGH MANY WINDOWS

QUEEN'S IN THE PARLOR

THREE FLIGHTS UP

(With Richard Boleslavski)

WAY OF A LANCER

LANCES DOWN

It's an Art

BY HELEN WOODWARD

HARCOURT, BRACE AND COMPANY

hb

NEW YORK

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W899I

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first edition

Typography by Robert Josephy

PRINTED IN THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

To my husband, W. E. Woodward

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

Though they may not agree with all the statements in this book, I should like to thank for their help—Charles C. Baldwin, Consumers' Union, Dr. Charles A. Marlies, Corinne Marsh, Mrs. John Shepard, of the New York State Liquor Control Board, Dr. Renée von Eulenberg-Wiener; and also the advertising men and women who have helped me but who prefer to remain anonymous.

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IT'S AN ART

1. O PARADISE!

A FASHIONABLE New York preacher wrote to one of the most articulate of our patent medicine advertisers: "Doesn't advertising promote crime by engendering covetousness, envy and desire on the part of the poor? It seems to me that you should take steps about this. I wish you would give me the answer so that I can tell the congregation about it next Sunday."

The patent medicine man was taken aback. But you can't stop an ad-man as long as words are lying around loose. "It isn't the function of advertising to prevent crime," he wrote the preacher. "That's the function of the church."

Function is a fine word. Nobody used it in the advertising business in its more rowdy days. In the twenties service was the slogan word for pompous, oratorical occasions. Now it's *function*. If the preacher should come back again and demand, "Well, what then is the function of advertising?" the ad-man would most likely say that the function of advertising is "to raise the standard of living." But if you took off your coat and sat down at his desk with some pads and pencil and asked: "Now what's our next job?"—you had dropped the *function* with your coat—he would say, "To sell as much of our goods as possible, you goof, what do you think it is?"

Whether as a *job* or as a *function*, advertising spends over two billion dollars a year to change a people's buying

habits. It plays a greater part in daily living than either religion or patriotism.

In 1936 advertisers in the United States spent \$2,250,000,000. Three brands of cigarettes alone spent \$50,000,000. The two and a quarter billions worked fast and cheaply.

Suppose you take a page in the *Saturday Evening Post* for a new device. It costs you \$8,000 for the page for 3,000,000 copies. Suppose further that only one person in twenty copies reads your ad. Well, you have about 150,000 people who know something about you. Or an even cheaper paper. Suppose you take a page in Hearst's *American Weekly*. You get over 7,000,000 circulation and pay \$20,000 for the page. If one person in twenty reads your stuff, you have 350,000 possible customers. It costs you only about five cents to reach each of these people. And where the magazine is read by a household, it isn't one person you reach, but a whole family. The United States Census allows about three and a half people to a family, so your possible readers rise to over a million. All from one page and on one day.

The advertising man likes to think that his two and a quarter billion dollars raises the standard of living. He tells you that when he shows a new bathroom or a new automobile, he makes the American people live better. If he likes to intellectualize his processes, he will put it that advertising is based on the theory of obsolescence in merchandise in modern industry; but if he is just a plain fellow, he's more likely to say: "If I can make the guy see that the car he bought in March is out of date by October, I've got a pushover."

This attitude on the part of business men isn't, as you might think, anything new to our time. Miriam Beard, in *The History of the Business Man*, says: "Possibly the an-

cient Babylonian and the Phoenician and Greek traders imagined themselves to be conferring the benefits of superior culture upon our brawny ancestors."

Advertising, says the man on the inside, has traded up the buyer. It pulls him out of ruts. Small-town people remain small-town people because they have no desire to get something they don't know about. It's not what the customers want that the advertiser tries to sell, but something they don't know they want—perhaps a greater stability in product, perhaps a saving in time, perhaps a new taste. Sell the customer a better way to do a thing. Get him to try it. Most people resist change. In the beginning the consumer didn't want an auto. Now he can't give it up. Most people have a richer, more amusing life with automobiles than they had without them. Especially is this true of working people.

. . . If the automobile is by now a habit with the business class, a comfortable, convenient, pleasant addition to the paraphernalia of living, it represents far more than this to the working class; for to the latter it gives the status which his job increasingly denies, and, more than any other possession to which he has access, it symbolizes living, having a good time, the thing that keeps you working.¹

Of course, says the shrewd advertising man, you can't turn backward a people's habits of living. That would be just like going out and trying to sell the country a million buggy whips.

Thus advertising has helped to raise the standards of comfort and pleasure, has brought better houses, has put thousands of men to work in the automobile industry, improved taste in furnishings, has made both people and their houses cleaner. In Middletown the increased use of commercially

¹ *Middletown in Transition*, by Robert S. and Helen Lynd.

canned goods has meant "a marked spread in the variety and healthfulness of the diet of medium- and low-income families throughout the bulk of the year when fresh garden products are expensive." Advertising has urged John Brown to keep up with James Jones, and sometimes that has been a good thing. As I will show later on, even such bad advertising as that of dentifrices has improved the public health.

Advertising has jobs to do. Women, for instance, haven't learned how to use new stoves and iceboxes; they haven't caught up with domestic labor-saving appliances. Here there's still legitimate work to be done in what advertising calls consumer education.

Thus, obsolescence is the word on the advertising banner. But obsolescence makes an automobile no good long before it is worn out. Advertising proves to the reader by this new gadget, that new line, this new angle, that he should be ashamed to drive last year's car. The automobile advertiser makes his own car old-fashioned while it is still good for thousands of miles. This beautiful obsolescence theory has now turned around and handed the automobile manufacturer and worker a stiff jolt. The constant demand for new cars has piled up so many second-hand cars that the market is glutted with them.

To one group of economists this seems vicious; to another it seems helpful. To the consumer who is the victim, but the very willing victim, remember, of the practice of obsolescence, it has been expensive. To the worker in the automobile plants it has meant jobs.

A vivid picture of the tie-up of the obsolescence theory to advertising is the story of the Singer Sewing Machine Company. There are about twenty-two million Singer sewing machines in the United States. The bulk of Singer busi-

ness now lies in supplying machines to factories. This continues to be hugely successful and the company makes plenty of money. But the sale to private users has dropped steadily, though competition amounts to little. Practically everybody who can afford a private sewing machine, and wants one, has one already.

When the electric sewing machine was invented, Singer did a big replacement business. The clumsy hand machines were thrown out. Everybody got an electric—small, neat, and movable. But since then there has been no big improvement in the machine. Nobody has been able to show Singer how to bring back home-sewing, or how the housewife can compete with the dollar-fifty dress, or how to make the electric machines obsolescent. Singer tried sewing-clubs and sewing-classes, added gadgets to make quilting and shirring and embroidery, taught women how to make slip covers, gave courses in interior decorating. None of it accomplished much.

Years ago the Standard Sanitary Corporation of Pittsburgh did the first advertising of bathrooms. I worked on that a bit and I am sure that the ads which ran over many years had much to do with the change from the dark and dismal wooden tub to the glittering, comfortable bathroom of today. Of course, it wasn't the only cause. There couldn't have been any Standard Sanitary advertising if there hadn't come first the invention of a cheap enameling process. But given that, the advertising of Standard Sanitary preached better bathrooms and cleanliness. That advertising would look naïve and stodgy today. It was dignified and merely showed pictures of plain, good, white bathrooms.

Well, now look at what happens. The success of the

campaign rolls up production until cleanliness is pretty well taken care of. But more bathroom fixtures have to be sold, the old ones have to be ripped out, so ridiculous trimmings and gadgets, many of them the reverse of clean, are introduced. In the photographs the bathroom suddenly becomes sexy. Still, maybe that raises the standard of living too.

The same obsolescence theory rules women's clothes and, in a smaller degree, men's clothes. It changes floor coverings, shifts about building materials, starts styles of furnishings, invents new kitchen utensils. From all these a benefit can be shown by the advertising business, and to some extent it is a general benefit. Changes in fashion give work to more people; also, they give satisfaction to the consumer, who often finds a small change both refreshing and restful. A woman feels better with a new hat even though she doesn't need it, and a man feels better with a new tie. The whole household comes to fresh life with a new carpet on the floor although the old one wasn't bad. In all this, the ad-man can point to a stimulating effect on living standards.

If the ideas and pictures in its glamorous pages were 'always good ones, if the new furniture and the houses were always beautiful, if this year's gadget on the car made it better—then advertising could have a clear conscience. But the new is often worse than the old. If you have a white bathtub and the neighbors a pink one, then you're made to feel that you ought to have a pink one, too, whether you want it or not.

It isn't only the customer who is worried by all this. The manufacturer often doesn't know where he is at. The Chamber of Commerce of the United States calls the situation that has arisen "A Commercial Tower of Babel."

. . . Its pinnacle is almost beyond the reach of vision—the waste, folly and futility of such a monument . . . When a manufacturer is asked what he can accomplish toward reducing the number of styles, he shakes his head and says that “his trade demands novelties,” while the trade says, “The manufacturer produces these styles and if my competitor handles them, I have to do the same or go out of business.”

Eagerness to prove social helpfulness leads to fantastic claims. The ad-director for the Henry L. Doherty Company tells how Arkansas farmers saw the bottom drop out of the cotton market with foreclosures and bank failures. Neighboring states had to give food to keep the farmers from starving. With bland self-confidence, he goes on: “It was while this state of affairs prevailed that the International Harvester Company came to their relief.” Through advertising, the company showed them how to raise diversified crops, to keep house, and so forth. Well, maybe it did, but there are probably other reasons for what little change has taken place in the Arkansas farmers’ standards of living.

But the radio announcer for the Firestone Tire Company rises to higher flights of fancy. “Harvey S. Firestone dreaming on his farm dreamed of the idea of putting tires on tractors.” So the greatest advance in 1936 was in farming, and that was in large part due to the use of Firestone tires on tractors. Oh, Mr. Wallace! Oh, tenant farmers!

But these, I suppose, are merely the suppressed desires of advertising. They probably do little harm. I can’t imagine that anybody believes them.

In quality of product, American business has on the whole improved. The customer gets better butter than he did twenty-five years ago. Under government regulation butter is now made in standardized places, it is free of

germs, and has to have a certain amount of butter fat.¹ You're not so likely to get water in your milk. It is easier to regulate quality of goods made on a big scale than when it is made by a great many small individuals.

In pre-advertising days, Danbury, Connecticut, which was the center for hat manufacturers, spread its hats slowly through the country. There was no fixed price. A Danbury hat that was sold for two dollars in Massachusetts might cost you five in Georgia or seven in Virginia. It might be of one quality in Georgia and another in Virginia. Now the price range doesn't vary so much and the quality even less. You have some sort of idea what you're buying under a trade-marked label. But while this steadying of product has been going on, advertising has lagged behind.

I was in the advertising business for many years and left it with a feeling that it was as hollow as it was big. Recently the idea began to grow on me that perhaps I had been unjust. There was a good deal I didn't know about the business; perhaps it was sounder than I thought. With that fundamental notion I began to gather the material for this book. The longer I worked and the more I looked into advertising, the more flimsy it seemed to be. Just as before, I found that the people in it were likeable, able, and often brilliant. But with few exceptions here and there, the work they do is trivial. It's got to be because its objective is not good work, not a better standard of living, not anything except to make more money. Once in a while the best way for a client to make money is to do something of social value, but usually it is the reverse.

If the client makes money, he at least is doing something

¹ But the customer doesn't get as good bread to spread his butter on!

that suits him. But the ad-writer is peculiarly frustrated because he's making money for someone else, not even essentially for his agency, but for the advertiser. Of course, the copy writer gets a raise in pay, but the large money-making in any creative or satisfying sense goes to the advertiser.

Advertising is not something that stands in the air by itself like the boy in the Indian juggling trick, with no visible means of support. Advertising is simply the hired worker of industry. It has most of the faults and the virtues of modern production. Large-scale industry, capitalistic or communistic, cannot exist without it. Advertising is the salesman. It does what the boss tells it to do.

Under any way of living advertising would have its place. In a non-profit-making society it would, of course, be quite different. It would merely tell about new products, train the public in their use, show ways to use up oversupplies. Today such an approach would be silly. Each advertiser has to fight every other. He's fighting the competitors in his own line, of course, but he's also fighting every other advertiser for the customers' money, for the best position in the magazine, the best page in the newspaper, the best time on the radio, the cleverest attention-getter. To win he's simply got to work the other fellow out of position. So the glib boasting and double-meaning stories of the old-fashioned traveling salesman now appear dressed up in handsome type or set off with radio music. And it's likely to get worse, because the position of business is going to be harder and the competition closer.

But if advertising is cheap and trivial, it's at least partly the customer's fault. Advertising is not always the Devil in the story and the customer not always the Angel. Samuel Butler, the "Hudibras" one, said that "Doubtless the pleas-

ure is as great, Of being cheated, as to cheat." Cheat is a strong word—and an old-fashioned one. Nobody cheats nowadays. The advertiser likes to tell fairy stories, and the customer likes to believe them. The fairy stories wouldn't be any use if the customer didn't help by his eagerness to believe.

From the inside the advertising man looks out in continual amazement on the believing public. "Why do they believe us? Don't they know we're trying to sell them something? Do they think we're going to tell them it's no good?"¹

But the customer has to believe something. When you go into a well-kept store where the man behind the counter wears a clean white coat, and he assures you that "this is really the best French cheese," you're likely to believe him even if you have never seen him before. In such neat circumstances, you think he wouldn't tell a bare-faced lie. So, too, the well-printed advertisement. The reader might doubt one which was smudged or on cheap, ugly paper, but he is tempted to believe the one that looks respectable. When the customer sees an advertisement that looks expensive, he is apt to think, "They wouldn't be spending all this money if they hadn't sold a lot of their goods. Plenty of other people have bought and so it must be good." Besides, he thinks, "They couldn't possibly print such lies."

And if the advertisement is in respectable company, "This," says the reader, "is a high-class magazine, and a high-class magazine wouldn't let them say such things if

¹ Evidently people who have religion are generally good believers because they are the biggest customers for patent medicines. Certain religious papers carry more patent medicine advertising than any others.

they weren't so." When the advertising claims are backed by the editorial department of the publication, the reader usually gives in with something like relief. The seal of approval of a magazine like *Good Housekeeping* is taken more seriously by the customers than it is by advertising people.

But just the same the customer is silly. He knows that the magazine and the advertiser are both in business to make money. If she pays too much for cosmetics, if he still drinks bad coffee, if he discards a perfectly good car for a new one not so good, if he smokes wretched cigarettes, if she overloads her stomach with oranges and eats imitation bread, it's at least partly their own doing.

If the customer thinks he can move into Paradise by spending three hundred dollars for a new model radio, and if his wife thinks that she can join him by paying three dollars for five cents' worth of cold cream—well, that's their dream and they're willing to pay for it. The customer seldom responds to reserved and honest claims; he likes the gaudy melodrama and the romantic lies.

But he is not so good a believer as he was. Growing consumer cynicism, especially among young people, is making things a bit harder for the advertising man. It is smart to be scornful, and scoffing is the fashion. But advertising rides even on that bandwagon. "Gimbel's Tells the Truth," said the headlines. People believe with a sneer, but they believe—and buy.

Luckily for the average man, this raucous giant is blundering and confused. Its arms and legs do not work together; its head is pointed in one direction, its feet in another.

I doubt if any of the social implications of advertising have ever been understood by most advertising men and women. It is really a form of centralization. When you sell a product by the same word and method all over the United States, you are working as hard as you can for centralization. Most advertising men fight for centralization in their advertising, but are bitterly opposed to it politically. They are in a muddle, or perhaps not really a muddle. Centralization in some ways seems to me, not only good, but inevitable, as far as it affects living, but not as it affects ideas. Living in society is a system of mechanics. Life and ideas are something else again. I think that many advertisers would like centralization of ideas as well as centralization of the mechanics of living. But they would object to political centralization, and it would be hard to make them believe that one leads inevitably to the other. They fight political centralization because it is easier to handle state legislatures and its courts than national ones.

More. I wonder how many advertising people realize that advertising itself is doing a good deal to bring about a social turnover. It is doing it because it can't help itself, unconsciously, as a natural part of a business need.

When you show a handsome bathroom to a woman who can't afford running water in her kitchen, and then you tell her that no house is decent without such a bathroom, you are making a mighty dissatisfied woman. You're arousing "envy, covetousness, and desire." And when you prove to a man that he is inferior because he doesn't buy the newest model car—when you do that to a man who often walks to work because five cents' carfare is too much—you are helping to make a rebel. Or you would be if your poorer readers had any spirit.

The world pictured in the advertising pages is a clean, neat, happy world, a world full of smiles. The threat and the sad face are considered bad advertising. If a sad face slips in, it is only to show in the next inch how happy it could be if it used the advertiser's product. The world of the advertising pages is like the world of the *National Geographic Magazine*, whose travelers never find any dirt, any poverty, any slums, any sorrow, any war. The real Utopia is the one in the advertising pages. When you show a happy world of beautiful cars, of washing machines, of leisure, of lovely linoleums, and pretty curtains—when you show all this to people who can't afford to live in it, you may in the long run arouse the spirit which will demand the promised world at any cost. You are educating people who haven't the money to demand a higher standard of living.

This sounds far-fetched and I'm glad to say that no advertising man would believe it. He doesn't really know where he's going, and he doesn't really care. A couple of years ago I saw a beautiful performance of *Uncle Tom's Cabin* put on with art and charm and at considerable expense. Every detail was perfect. The management spent weeks in trying to find genuine bloodhounds. At last they borrowed a pack from somewhere. The big moment came. Eliza, baby in arms, put her foot on the first ice cake. Out of the wings appeared the bloodhounds—a breathless moment! But, alas, instead of following Eliza, the hounds all turned and ran the other way. Perhaps, with great art, skill, and brains, advertising often is running the other way.

2. POKER TO POLO

ADVERTISING is, of course, as old as man, but let's not go too far back. Let's not bother with the stone signs in old Pompeii or the "quaint" notices from the time of Queen Elizabeth to the Civil War. It doesn't matter that Samuel Johnson, that superb example of successful free publicity, delivered a bitter tirade against advertising. All this has the same relation to modern advertising as has the cobbler who made a pair of shoes by hand to the United Shoe Machinery Corporation. The factories came first, the ads came second. In newspapers right after the Civil War there were ads of stoves, one of the early signs of factory production. But the small factory had grown into large-scale production before modern advertising arrived.

If you will follow back in your mind the development of industry from the little man who imported Turkish tobacco for a few customers and compare him with the American Tobacco Company today, you will see that the line parallels exactly the growth of the advertising business.

The first advertising of any size in America was that of patent medicines. Their advertising wasn't as bad as you think it was; it was worse. Other advertisers were decent and dull. Newbro's Herpicide stood out from among all these, both for honesty and for vividness. You probably remember it. It showed three funny little pictures of the same man, each time with less hair on his head and less hair on his comb. Way ahead of its time, Newbro said that

only nature can grow hair, ad-claimed only that Herpicide could cure dandruff and stop falling hair.

Peruna topped the list in money spent. Dr. Munyon pointed his finger and yelled, "you!" Lydia Pinkham's Female Compound didn't go well until they put a nice kind picture of the generous lady in all the ads. Many a newspaper kept alive through cures for lost manhood.

By 1889 Eastman was spending \$750,000 a year, and Royal Baking Powder \$500,000. Three that have almost disappeared were Sapolio, Pyle's Pearline, and Pear's Soap. "Good morning, have you used Pear's Soap?" and Sapolio's Spotless Town played a big part in the snappy talk of the day. Where have they gone? Ad-men will tell you gladly that they dwindled because they stopped advertising. "You can't have a silent product," says the advertising man. "It must be articulate. There are so many competitors that if a fellow's quiet, he's forgotten."

But it was not until the beginning of the twentieth century, with the coming of the automobile, that advertising began to jump toward its present heights. In the *Scientific American* in 1898 the Winton car had one inch of space. That ad sold one car. Eleven years later, \$2,000,000 was being spent for advertising automobiles; by 1914, over \$4,000,000. In 1934, General Motors alone spent \$13,841,884.

As late as 1919 an account of a million dollars a year was a huge one. Today, an advertiser who spends a million dollars is in the second rank. Income and excess profit taxes gave the advertising business a boost right after the World War. Corporations figured that they would rather pay out money in advertising than as taxes to the government. A great deal of this was wasted, because the manufacturer pre-

ferred the slim chance of getting something out of his name in print to paying his share in Washington. That sort of nonsense got a severe setback in 1929.

But advertising came back. In 1934 Liggett & Myers Tobacco Company spent \$11,750,580; Reynolds Tobacco Company, \$9,416,851; American Tobacco Company, \$8,597,787; Standard Brands (foods), \$6,658,021; Procter & Gamble, \$6,085,418.

In the beginning, the advertiser merely announced his product. Later, he added flourishes both in type and words. Whether the advertising was honest or not depended on the individual.

Colgate's first advertising in 1817 said courteously: "Soap and candle manufactory has for sale on the best terms a constant supply of soap, mould and dipt candles of the first quality."

It would seem crazy to the modern advertiser to remind customers that he had a "constant" supply of anything. Modern advertising is always in a hurry, always breathless, always practically out of stock. If the customer had time to think things over, he might forget to buy at all.

By 1887 Colgate's had gone on a bit. They said that their toilet soap was made with the utmost care from the purest materials.

Colgate has abandoned its leisure, and although it still remains among the more dignified of the advertisers, its Palmolive advertising today is lyrical about skins that are "soft, smooth, young," about "nature's finest beauty oils," about "Palmolive's kindness to the skin," about the "school-girl complexion."

Ivory Soap began to float way back in 1891. It didn't begin to be 99.44% pure until the present century.

Most of the advertisers of about 1900 had no standards of any kind—either of taste or of morals. Sometimes they tried to be funny, with disastrous results, as when Daniel Green ad-said: “Here is a strange case. The man is unmistakably dead, the limbs are frozen stiff and yet the feet are warm.” From this delicate bit of publicity the reader was to assume that the advertised shoes would keep his feet warm.

Harriet Hubbard Ayer who then sold “toilet preparations” instead of “cosmetics” was one of the first “human interest” ghouls. Two cartoon old maids sat stiffly upright, each with a bottle of poison in her hand, and these threatening words,

Two aged maiden sisters committed suicide last Tuesday. They left a letter saying there was “nothing in life” for old maids. No woman need die an old maid who uses Recamier Toilet Preparations.

Long before the day of Pond’s, Harriet Hubbard Ayer backed her statements with testimonials from Adelina Patti, Fanny Davenport, Sarah Bernhardt and Lily Langtry.

One advertiser offered a set of furniture for a dollar, with a drawing. When the farmer drove to the station with his wagon he found a set of doll’s furniture. The advertiser pointed out with truth that his description had been accurate. How’d he know the farmer didn’t own a doll?

Nowadays the lies are not so wild, but they are more astute. Advertising no longer merely describes products, and “human interest” is a bit dated. It may try to sell pineapple juice as medicine, or Listerine as a bit of charm magic; it may, though it seems to be addressed to you, not be meant for you at all, but over your head to the legislature or to Congress.

It is a long stretch from the simple-minded, crude Daniel Green shoe ad to that of Horn & Hardart Cafeterias during a strike in 1937. This ad is still crude, but by no means simple. In the picture, the Automat puts a sign in the window—Pumpkin Pie 10¢. Immediately a procession of pickets throws down its strike placards and rushes wildly into the door. "Even the pickets can't resist when the spicy aroma of the season's first Horn & Hardart pumpkin pie wafts through the revolving doors of the Automats. They drop their signs and join the throngs who are coming in for tantalizing golden slices." As you can see, this cynical humor at the expense of the strikers doesn't merely try to sell goods, but tries to influence the public in what is known as an institutional manner. Horn & Hardart's ancestor would try merely to sell a pie, but Horn & Hardart today tries to sell itself as an institution in a labor crisis.

As a salesman the ancestor was the more clever of the two. Many people didn't know Horn & Hardart had a strike until the ad told them about it.

In the lush growth of the American advertising business, the advertising agency has played the biggest part. So when you see what happened to the agency, you get a picture of the whole.

As far as the public is concerned, the advertising agency is nonexistent. Yet nearly everything you hear or read in the way of advertising is its work. But it is anonymous. The advertising agency never speaks to the consumer in the first person. It speaks to the public, but always with the voice of the client—the manufacturer. It has no voice of its own. It stands between the advertising medium ¹ on the one hand

¹ In ad-language, the medium is the carrier of the ad, that is, the newspaper, the magazine, the radio, the billboard.

and the manufacturer on the other. It acts as adviser to the client on sales and advertising much as the lawyer acts for him in the law. But the agency also represents the medium. And—a further twist—it gets its chief pay, not from the advertiser who employs it, but from the medium.

Roughly, advertising is divided into five big divisions: national (in newspapers and magazines), radio, billboard, mail order, and local. Local includes department store ads. Much of the mail order and the local is handled directly. All the rest is “placed” through advertising agencies. Of over two billion dollars spent, half goes through agencies. There are 1,479 in the United States. These set the tone, establish the standards. The rest of the money is too scattered in local expenditure to set any tone.¹

Until about 1910, the advertising business was a kind of adventure. Its people had a sense of high excitement. Few of them looked on their work as a profession or an art. They thought it merely a gamble. They were exploring new worlds.

There were plenty of stories of sudden and fantastic success. One day a solicitor from the J. Walter Thompson Company went to Lowell, Mass., to see his client, who sold Ayer's Sarsaparilla, a patent medicine. When he got through, he had an hour to spare. Walking about killing time, he saw some queer-looking rubber objects in the window of a little shoe store. Inside was the owner, an excited giant named O'Sullivan. He had once been a printer and hadn't liked the way his feet clattered on the stone floors, so he cut out pieces of rubber and fastened them to his heels. They were fine. He'd built up a nice local business on them.

¹ Also, department stores and mail order houses are so close to the customer that they have to have a higher standard of honesty than the national advertiser. Dishonesty may mean returned goods at a loss.

"You ought to advertise them," said the solicitor automatically. "Haven't any money," said O'Sullivan. Still killing time, the advertising man gave him a good talk, went back to New York and forgot him. But in a week or two, Mr. O'Sullivan turned up and startled the agency. "I sold my shoe store. Here's \$1,200 I got for it. Put me out some ads." Old Mr. Thompson didn't want to take the money. "We can't take this man's \$1,200. He can't afford it. It's everything he's got." But the casual salesman had done his work well. O'Sullivan insisted. That was the beginning, and soon in picture and text the successful man was walking on O'Sullivan's Rubber Heels: "This is the ticket to Easy Street." "Walking on a rubber sidewalk." "O'Sullivanize your walk." In a few years O'Sullivan sold the business through J. P. Morgan & Company for two million dollars.

That was the kind of story that flew about in 1910. We were playing on people's emotions, as a man might play on a violin. Not as on a piano-player, where the tones are made, but on the violin, where he makes the tones himself. Everything was new. We knew nothing about the client's business. An agency, say, had the Vose Piano Company account. Each month they used a quarter-page on the back cover of every important magazine. But nobody in the agency knew anything about pianos; nobody there could play a piano, and nobody dreamed of trying to find out anything about the Vose business.

There was no standard of honesty. If you were able to put over a trick on the public, you did it. Many of the men—there were practically no women—were as honorable people as I have ever known. But this business of advertising was a game. It was a contest with the public to see what

you could put over. It is still that today, although now it is more pompous and more cautious.

The first advertising agency I worked for was a kind of madhouse. Its head was a black-eyed man named Ben Hampton. Everything was eager and noisy from morning till night. We looked on the copy writers in that agency as important people. They worked long hours with great joy. The agency has long since disappeared, but all those copy writers later amounted to something.

We had three departments, altogether, and they got all mixed up with each other. I wasn't anything as important as a copy writer. All I did was to order engravings and printing. But everything around my desk was lively; everyone ran, everyone argued, everyone dashed to the telephone. We had no research department. Nobody dreamed of looking anything up because nothing had ever happened before. There were no records showing what other advertisers had spent. There were just a lot of people with astute and ingenious minds putting something over on the public and having an exciting and pretty good time doing it.

Copy (ad-writing) was of immense importance then because that was what an agency did—that's what advertising people did. They wrote copy; they took hold of the manufacturer's product and they told the public about it. Few advertising writers and no agency pretended to know anything about the manufacturer's business. It was a matter of loud adjectives, "clever ideas," and cheap pictures.

In 1912, I went to the Frank Presbrey agency as a copy writer. The whole picture had changed. Advertising was growing up and the Frank Presbrey agency was a much more sober affair than the old Ben Hampton agency. Not nearly so much excitement. There were still almost no

women. Mr. Presbrey was a director of banks and on the boards of some of our accounts. We had no research department and no records, except those of our own clients. But we had one hundred people where the Ben Hampton Agency had about twenty. We had an organized filing and checking department and the copy writers all sat in individual offices. We had a president and one vice-president—only one. We thought of ourselves as professional people.

Agencies which had money sometimes financed accounts. When Kodak was a baby, Eastman didn't have the money to advertise it. Frank Seaman, prosperous ad-agent, advanced long credits in return for stock. Kodak grew up and Frank Seaman grew richer from his Kodak stock than from his advertising business.

At this time we talked a good deal about the psychological approach to the public. We didn't merely take a product and describe it. We tried to figure out what about our product would work on the emotions, and we began carefully to play on them.

In advertising sets of books we stopped describing the books, but showed what the reader might get out of them in education or pleasure. In advertising a cake-pan, we showed a recipe for cake. Of course, something of the sort had been done before. Harriet Hubbard Ayer did it in her old-maid advertisement, but now this indirect method began to flourish, and it has come into a rank flowering in such present-day advertising as that of Listerine and Yeast. All this, of course, merely follows the standard precepts laid down for all salesmen.

After I got dissatisfied with writing copy for a salary, I went on a commission basis. We had perhaps three men in

the office working on a similar basis. That is, we got a commission from the agency for the accounts we brought in. After two or three years, I shifted to another agency and took my accounts with me. I repeated that twice in the next seven or eight years. My customers (or clients) didn't care where I went so long as the establishments had financial responsibility.

You see, the business was an individual one. Like me, there were a great many individuals who owned their own accounts. They could have established agencies of their own. But that would have meant financing. And no doubt, like myself, many of them disliked the minutiae of business economy. If we had our own agencies, we couldn't have escaped them. So what we really did was to hire an existing agency to do the routine and financing. We couldn't do that so easily today. The business is on too large a scale. It takes too much machinery. Today, except in very small concerns, nobody is allowed to work on commission. The larger agency owns the account. Once when I was making one of these shifts from one agency to another, a customer asked me to talk to Bruce Barton (now Congressman Barton) of Batten, Barton, Durstine & Osborn. Mr. Barton said to me, "There is no place for you in our outfit because we own our accounts, and we're going to get most of the money out of them." That, I suppose, is typical of the larger agencies.

The day is almost gone when a man with brains can sit in a little two-by-four office and develop a huge advertising agency. He may still do so, because after all ingenuity and clever writing are important in the business. But it is almost impossible.

As you turn the pages of your overloaded magazine, you probably think that a manufacturer with money in his hands comes to an agency and says what a good little boy am I, and how cheap my product is, and how fine it is. Then the agency goes ahead and puts that in clever language and clever pictures.

But that's not the way it is. What happens when an agency starts to work on a new account is quite different. Here and there a man merely sits down and tries to be clever about what the manufacturer tells him. But for the thorough and able advertising man, that is merely the last step after a long, hard climb.

An agency doesn't take a product and merely describe it. Sometimes it starts actually before the product is even named and sometimes before the plant is built. When in 1921 Primrose House started with a line of cosmetics, the agency I was with helped to pick out their location, suggested their method of procedure, chose the name Primrose House, planned the packages and the labels, engaged a woman with social connections to head the business. All this was done before a single ounce of cold cream was manufactured. Indeed, the advertisements were ready long before manufacturing was begun.

The Frank Presbrey Company as it was in 1913 would seem insignificant besides a typical big agency of today. The one I am going to describe would not be the biggest in the United States. It might be fourth or fifth. This agency employs about six hundred people, it has twenty departments—contract, media and marketing departments, an enormous library and research department. It has, of course, a personnel department. And it has one department which it calls, aptly, "short course boys." These are youngsters;

they don't have to be college graduates, but they have to be young men, not young women. They are taken in and shot through the organization, spending two or three days or a week in each department learning the technicalities, and then are put to work in the copy department. They are paid about fifteen dollars a week while they're learning.

In addition to all this, such an agency has a publicity department. In the United States, publicity and advertising are technically two different things. Advertising is what you pay for; publicity is what your public relations man gets out in newspapers, magazines, and radio for nothing. In the old days, advertising agencies regarded publicity people with contempt and anger. Free publicity was taking the cake out of their mouths. Most agencies wouldn't have anything to do with it. Today, most big agencies have regular publicity departments for which they charge a fee and so get back some of the money they lose through free publicity.

An agency like this does about \$20,000,000 of business a year. On this it makes a commission of \$3,000,000, but its income is more than that because it charges fees for special work in the way of research or publicity. Also there are commissions on all printing, engraving and art work, also on radio entertainers' fees. It has four or five branches in the United States and has representatives in Europe and South America. And yet this is not really an independent business in any way. I mean it does not start at the beginning of anything. It is employed by other business enterprises to do a certain job.

The payroll is the biggest part of the expense of an advertising agency. Talent and clerical labor—these are the two things employed by the agency. On the whole, its

people are well paid. The average pay throughout the business is \$2,200 a year. Stenographers in an agency like the one I describe get from \$22 to \$50 a week. Librarians get about \$35 a week, and the head librarian gets from \$5,000 to \$10,000 a year. Copy writers start in as learners at \$15 a week and go up to \$10,000 a year. Account executives are likely to make from \$10,000 to \$35,000 a year. Here and there one who controls big business gets as much as \$100,000 a year. Radio directors are important, getting from \$10,000 to \$35,000 a year. These salaries, as you can see, fall into the same class as those of highly paid corporation employees. No advertising agency has made any huge fortune.

Big agencies are now careful to have good copy writers. All of them have research departments. They provide maps and charts and make some pretense of studying the client's business. But there are only a few who make real studies such as that I describe later on in the canning industry. Mostly they have piles of questionnaires and fine colored maps and charts which mean nothing. When you deal with people who are uncertain of themselves, if you get abstruse enough, whether it is literature you're handling or ads, you're apt to make them believe that you know more than they do.

Often the owner of the agency is a good business man, but sometimes he has little to do with the actual service to the clients and the people who do this service. The copy and research people, on the contrary, are rarely good businessmen.

There has been a great deal of wailing on the part of advertising clients lately because so many copy writers seem to have interests which they consider subversive. The ad-

writers, since they have to supply brains and imagination and seldom get the biggest money, are inclined to the left. They are such traitors as to like Roosevelt, and some of them are even for the American Labor Party. There are Communists among them, and Socialists, but these keep very quiet. Advertising clients try to fight these "vicious tendencies," but they creep out. If the copy writer is good, the agency will overlook his radical opinions and keep them a secret from the client.

Advertising agencies are not paid by the advertiser. They are paid by the medium, that is, by the radio or the newspaper or magazine or billboard company. If you want to spend a thousand dollars in the *New York Times*, you can take it there directly and put in a thousand dollars' worth of advertising. If you go to an agency, you get exactly the same amount of advertising for your thousand dollars and the agency draws back from the *Times* 15 per cent, or \$150. This is the agency's payment for writing your copy, etc. But if you go directly to the newspaper or magazine, nobody gets any 15 per cent commission. It is an idiotic arrangement which came about because in the beginning advertising agencies were salesmen for the magazines and newspapers. It is obviously the advertiser and not the newspaper or magazine which should pay the commission. The newspapers and magazines naturally prefer the present arrangement because under it the more of the client's money an agency spends, the more it makes for itself. If the agency worked on a direct fee for the advertiser, it would have an incentive to save his money. The advertiser foolishly prefers the present way because he can delude himself into the notion that he isn't paying any commission. To find big business men so impractical is a little startling.

The regular agency commission is 15 per cent, and there's a rigid agreement among agencies not to split this with the customer, but such agreements hold about as well as most commercial pacts. Many accounts are still placed on a split commission, though less than in other days. Often there is no sense in paying the full commission, as some advertisers have fully organized departments and do most of their own work, leaving nothing to the agency except the paying of bills and clerical work.

The advertising business has as pretty a set of copybook maxims as any other business. One of the handsomest is the one about truth in advertising. Another, very good-looking too, is that no agency of standing will try to take a satisfied client away from another agency. These maxims are saved for speeches at banquets while for everyday use the agency does its best to get every possible account. The American Association of Advertising Agents (the Four A's) is supposed to see that its members keep this rule.

Nevertheless, most big agencies have a regular new business department which gives its whole time to trying to get accounts from other agencies. Since getting three new accounts in one year is good, and getting as many as twelve is a phenomenon, these departments have to take a good deal of ribbing. They are full of false alarms and big promises. A man rushes in excitedly with a "lead." The American Brewers Association has invited the agency to submit material. So that agency and many others get up speculative campaigns sometimes costing thousands of dollars. (Speculative campaigns are forbidden by the Four A's, but what of it?) The excuse is that the advertiser invited them, with an elaborate pretense that the advertiser is going to pay the expense of the speculative campaign. The advertiser never

does so. Nobody believes a word of this, and yet in public everybody speaks of it as though it were absolute and solemn truth. So the whole agency field throbs in an air of jittery frenzy.

There are all sorts of ways of getting accounts, ranging from the country club bar to the copy department and from the Senate of the United States to the librarian at a research desk. They follow the pattern familiar in other business. One way to get an account is to marry the boss's daughter. Some agencies have more social class than others. Accounts are given to agencies with distinguished connections. . . . People in the business remember the time when Walter E. Edge was made Ambassador to France and the advertising agency of which he was associated gained many new accounts.

Accounts are sometimes acquired through bribery, or because the man inside the agency knows the girls and the night clubs or can hold a startling amount of liquor. Advertising salesmen probably have to do a little more entertaining than others because what they have to sell is intangible. Close personal relations are often necessary because they can't prove their case—even when it's a good case—any other way.

General Motors is the biggest advertising account in the United States. When Alfred Sloan, Chairman of the Board of General Motors, was a young man, he started a bicycle business in partnership with a man named Ewald. Later, Mr. Sloan became sales manager of the Hyatt Roller Bearing Company. Mr. Ewald went into the advertising business. Naturally, Mr. Sloan trusted him and gave him his account. Later, when Mr. Sloan joined General Motors, Mr. Ewald got all General Motors advertising. Mr. Sloan

knew Mr. Ewald well; he had a high opinion of him as a business man. Since then, according to the new policy of big advertisers, General Motors advertising has been split up. But Mr. Ewald holds the Hyatt Roller Bearing and the huge Chevrolet account. When young men ask me how to make a success in the advertising business, I feel like telling them that one way is to grow up with Alfred P. Sloan.

Another way to make a success is to go to college with some Morgan partner. When old J. P. Morgan was alive, Morgan accounts went generally to Thomas F. Logan (later taken over by Lord & Thomas), Bruce Barton, and the J. Walter Thompson Company. This means accounts in which J. P. Morgan had a controlling interest, like General Electric, New York Central, Radio Corporation of America, Lamont Corliss, Johns-Manville, Standard Brands, International Mercantile Marine. The younger Morgan allows more independence to the various companies financed by Morgan, and so some of these accounts have been shifted about. But the J. Walter Thompson Company still gets huge slices, and Batten, Barton, Durstine & Osborn has plenty.

Thus the organization of the advertising business has changed from a little hole-in-the-wall to a big, ordered affair. But its attitude toward the public has not changed much. The main idea still is, "Can we put this over?"

In 1905 advertising had no class. Its chief sport was poker. In 1914 it was golf. And today it is getting to be polo. The advertising business is "big."

3. WHO BUYS FRUIT?

THE most important product advertised is food. So as an example of how an agency goes about the business of selling goods for a manufacturer, foods will serve best. Of possible foods, I have chosen canned fruits because their advertising has been of a higher grade than that of most others. Canned fruit people are no better than any other advertisers, but they have a product for which there's a real demand—almost a need—and they don't have to cut up so many didos as the man whose goods no one wants.

Let us suppose that you and I belong to an agency—Diller & Tiller, known affectionately and otherwise in the trade as the D.T.'s. And let us suppose further that we have "sold ourselves" to the Rosabella Company, packers of canned fruit.

We have never had a food account in the office before, and so we ourselves have to learn a great deal about advertising foods. One of the things which keeps creative people interested in advertising is this occasional chance to study a new industry.

Let us suppose then that as members of Diller & Tiller we are getting up a campaign to sell Rosabella canned fruits. There's a lot to do before we even think about writing a piece of copy or drawing a layout. First, we'd find out how much fruit has been eaten in the United States. Then we'd find out what are the uses of Rosabella fruit? where does it fit into the menu? is it a breakfast food? is it a des-

sert food? will it be eaten by well-to-do, by middle-class, or by poor people? And then, what would it displace? Does it take the place of prunes? of tomato juice? of oranges?

These facts our research department gets from a number of sources. The United States Government has many of them. Most trades have some statistics, although they often don't know how to use them. There are special organizations which work for the advertising and other business. Of these, the best-known is George Gallup. There is also Link, who has a service like Gallup's; Daniel Starch, whose reports are nearly always too optimistic; Clark Hooper, rather theoretical; John B. Watson, the psychologist, who has written several books that should be useful. Some of the larger magazines and newspapers will do investigating for us, and we will do some ourselves.

We know that great changes have taken place in the eating habits of this country in the last thirty years. We realize that fruit has become a luxury; it was never a necessity. The human body needs meat, vegetables, and cereal to keep well. While fruit is a help, it is not necessary. If it becomes dear, people won't be able to buy it. When people economize, one of the first things they cut out is fruit.

Then we find out something we ought to know, but which we had overlooked—that all fruits compete with all other fruits. If you are eating oranges at a meal, you'll probably not eat pears or peaches.

Dazzled by ad-pictures of oranges and pineapple in ripe colors, we are surprised to learn that per man the United States is eating less fruit than it did. In 1899 the country had about 76 million people; in 1919, 105 million; yet during those twenty years the use of apples fell from $8\frac{1}{2}$ to $7\frac{1}{2}$ billion pounds. People—30 million more; apples—a bil-

lion pounds less.¹ During the same time grapes and peaches rose about a billion pounds each. The use of oranges and pineapple grew fast. Bananas stood still, and so did the minor fruits. Nonetheless, the whole dropped slightly in proportion to the population.

The same story another way—in 1899 the United States produced and imported about 192 pounds of fruit a year for each person. But in 1919 the country produced and imported only 185 pounds for each person. Seven pounds less. Oranges climbed and apples fell. But the whole dropped. The figures for today would tell the same story. This is partly because the fruit-eating habits of the American people are changing, but it is even more so because fruit costs more than it did.

When I was a child apples were five cents a pail in New York. Even with the change in the price index, that same quantity of apples ought not to cost fifty cents today—especially when you consider ad-boasts about increased facilities for shipping and marketing. But it's exactly these improvements in marketing which have sent up the price of food to the point where today there are millions of people in America who can't afford to buy fruit. There are other millions who can eat wild blackberries, but who can never buy an orange or an apple, and who in the cities eat almost no fruit at all. Fewer people can afford to eat fruit today than could do so twenty-five years ago.

In the trade, fruit is divided into two kinds: commercial and noncommercial. The noncommercial is cheap fruit not graded. The commercial covers the expensive varieties elaborately marked. In 1899 only one-third of the fruit sold was

¹ In 1929, apples had fallen further—360,000,000 pounds in one year.

the commercial or expensive type, but by 1919 almost seven-tenths was the commercial or expensive type.

The branding of fruits sends up the price because of extra expenses of advertising and handling and also because farmers can no longer grow fruit for sale as a by-product. Apples sold by brands have to be carefully packed so that it isn't worthwhile to pick off the ground the apples that don't look quite so nice. They often taste better, but they don't look well packed in boxes. It doesn't pay the farmer to ship such apples, so, ironically, because of improved marketing conditions, these good apples, when they're not used for making cider or vinegar, are allowed to rot.

Bananas are sometimes thrown overboard to keep up prices. Peaches, oranges, and other fruit are destroyed by the farmer because he either has to destroy them or pay freight to a shipping point where he won't even get his freight money back. Once in a while in the cities one kind of fruit or another is a glut on the market and poor people can buy it cheap. But—and this is comforting—the price of oranges is today much lower than it was in 1919. But then so is the price of bananas.¹ Oranges were heavily advertised, yet their price fluctuated wildly between 1919 and 1936. The price of bananas fluctuated hardly at all. These were not advertised. But the comparison is unfair because bananas are sold by a trust which keeps the price level even if it has to destroy fruit to do so.

No doubt the people you know are eating more fruit. They do so because of advertising and because doctors and dietitians recommend it, and because the women's magazines and the women's pages of the newspapers have pounded away at it. People who can afford to do so are eat-

¹ U. S. Department of Labor Statistics.

ing more fruit than they used to and also eating more expensive fruit. As a direct result of that, as you can see, poorer people are eating less fruit.

Diller & Tiller wouldn't be advertising fresh fruit, but Rosabella canned fruit would be competing with fresh fruit so we would have to know the whole fruit situation. When fresh peaches are cheap, Rosabella would sell less canned peaches. Also, in prosperous years people eat more canned fruit. In depression years, they eat more raisins and prunes.

Then we have to find out how much of the fruit that is being sold is canned fruit.¹ We learn that in the last twenty years canned fruit has increased from $4\frac{1}{2}$ million cases to about $26\frac{1}{2}$ million, but its value has increased actually 1,200 per cent. People are eating six times as much canned fruit, but they are paying twelve times as much for it. Dried fruit has also risen and there, too, value has risen twice as fast as quantity. How does it happen that prices have increased so much more than production?

We have got hold of a Preliminary Report of an Urban Study of Consumer Purchases made by the United States Bureau of Labor Statistics for the year 1935-36. This report is at the moment not yet complete or ready for publication, but we make it our business to get mimeographed advance copies. Anybody else can get them, of course, who wants to. Besides this, we have the National Health Survey for 1935-36 put out by the United States Public Health Service. And on top of that we get some special figures from the Resettlement Administration.

Taking all these figures and doing a little statistical work

¹ The raw fruit used for canning is included in the figures given above.

on them, we discover that the income of the United States for 1936 was divided roughly in this way:

	Per Cent
Persons on Relief.....	17.1
Up to \$1,500 a year.....	52.8
(The average yearly income in this group, excluding the relief class, was about \$1,160)	
From \$1,500 to \$3,000 a year.....	23.8
Over \$3,000 a year.....	6.3

These figures are not absolutely accurate because the government reports do not agree with each other. Some were taken in one set of circumstances, and some in another. But the differences are not more than one or one-and-a-half per cent for any classification. Certainly they are accurate enough to serve as a basis for a sound advertising plan.

Now what do we get from these figures? Can these people buy canned fruits or can't they?

The people on relief can hardly buy bread, much less canned fruit, so they're out of our picture. According to United States Government information \$500 is absolutely the least a family can spend for necessities in food. That leaves the lowest income-earning group with only \$660.50 to spend for rent, clothing, doctors' bills, carfare, and luxuries in food. We see at once that this group will not spend anything for food luxuries, and canned fruit is a luxury. We realize then that nearly 70 per cent of the American people have no meaning for us on Rosabella. We will not try to reach them.

We also know that the 6.3 per cent of the top income group is not going to buy a great deal of canned fruit.

While it is a luxury product to the ordinary person, the well-to-do do not consider it elegant and prefer fresh fruit. So we know that our advertising must go to the 23.8 per cent of the people in the middle income group. But before taking this for granted, let's get a little more information.

The Department of Labor, at the request of the Ford Motor Company, made a thorough study of 100 Ford workers. This study is of great value to the advertising man, that is, it is if he knows it exists. I am picturing us here as very good advertising people indeed. We know nearly everything.

What do the 100 Ford families do with their income? The U. S. Department of Labor report for 1930 shows that they spend each hundred dollars this way:

	<i>Per Cent</i>
Rent	22.6
Heat and light.....	6.0
Food	32.3
Clothing	12.2
Household equipment	5.2
Entertainment and recreation, luxury diets, professional services and personal items.....	21.7

As usual, the smaller the income, the larger the percentage needed for food. A report from the Department of Labor for Ford families in 1934 shows little difference. In 1934 the Ford family spent more for food, more for clothing, and less for rent. 1930 was the beginning of panic time, and the big cuts came in food and clothing. More was paid for rent, because rents were higher and had no relation to income.

Now the thing that is important for us to know from this is that there was a cut of almost 6 per cent in the food

budget of these people. That, of course, means that all food luxuries were cut down or cut out.

All right, now we'll find out how the family money for food is usually spent. In 1937, Isidor Lubin, commissioner of labor statistics of the U. S. Department of Labor, said that an analysis of 300,000 wage earners and their families showed that out of \$1,400 a year, \$8 a week was spent for food. That would make \$416 a year, which is pretty close to the figure in the Ford workers' report. He says that these market baskets held too much flour, bread, potatoes and pork, too little variety in meat, not enough green vegetables and milk.

In "America's Capacity to Consume,"¹ we find four types of American food budgets. The restricted diet for emergency use costs \$350. This is interesting in itself, but has no interest for Rosabella, as we can't expect to put canned fruit on that diet. Next comes an adequate diet of \$500. This also has no interest for us. We can't squeeze in there. Third comes an adequate diet of moderate cost of \$800, and fourth a liberal diet of \$950.

Both of these hold possibilities for us on Rosabella. How much of this food money goes for fruit? On the \$800 and \$950 diet about one-third goes into fruit and vegetables. So we can sell some Rosabella to these people. But before going further we must look once more at the 100 Ford families. We found out that they spent 32.3 per cent for food. Now we must see just what sort of food they bought with that money.

These families have, as we found before, \$556 to spend for food and they spend it as follows:

¹ Circular No. 296.

Milk and milk products.....	\$120.83
Meat	104.37
Bread	54.20
Vegetables	51.18
Fruits	39.89
Eggs	36.57
Other items	149.69

But what fruits?

Fresh fruits	\$32.90
Dried fruits	3.00
Canned fruit	3.99

On fresh fruits, apples top the list, oranges second, bananas third. Cantaloupe and grapefruit are at the bottom. On dried fruits, raisins come first, then prunes, then peaches. On canned fruits, peaches first, pineapple second, all others combined, third.

Here we are at last at the point we've been trying to reach. \$3.99 will buy about twenty cans of fruit a year, so once again we have a proof that these lower income groups are no real market for Rosabella. They cannot afford to buy canned fruit.

But it is not exact to say that a man making \$1,500 a year can't afford to buy canned fruit. He could occasionally buy a can, but there are other things he considers more important. He will sacrifice luxury in food in order to get a cheap automobile, which he regards as a necessity, and which to many working people is a necessity. This is also true of the radio. People will cut out food and clothes in order to have a radio. So that we may be able to sell this man a few cans of pineapple or peaches for special occasions—a wedding anniversary, a graduation party, a birthday, or

Christmas. In such American households a can of peaches is often a better Christmas treat than a pumpkin pie.

This seems to be a good deal of work just to find out who is likely to buy Rosabella fruit. But we have got to know that, otherwise we might waste most of our advertising. Remember, though, that if we were advertising something cheaper, something necessary, we would have to reach the bottom market, which can't buy fruit. Drugs and cigarettes, cleansing soaps and powders, the cheaper canned soups and beer, reach this market. These people can't buy packaged flour, packaged raisins, packaged sugar, packed coffee, high-priced cereals. They can't afford dentifrices, toilet paper, face creams, electric irons—the list is endless. If we are good advertising people, we say, "If you tell me you have a \$1,200 income, I can tell you what you buy." This is the sort of thing every advertising man should know but few do know.

Let us go at it another way. There are twenty and a half million families in the United States. Each family, rich or poor, has the same amount of physical consuming ability, but two-thirds of the families have a purchasing power of only 15 per cent of the total.

But since we're advertising people and not economists, we are not going to sit down and accept the judgment handed us by these figures. We are not going to believe that only these people can buy our goods. Our definition of the standard of living isn't that of, for instance, the Department of Labor. "A standard of living," says the advertising man, "is a measurement of your ability to spend, to buy something you can get along without, but that you want—a reaching out." So we try to "raise the standard of living" of as many people as we can to the point where they will eat a can of Rosabella fruit once in a while.

That is how we get our basic information if we are advertising a food luxury. But suppose instead we were selling a dentifrice. We might go about it this way. We would probably have a large research department in our own office which would find out first who uses dentifrices, why, and what they like. But we would not rely on this. We would probably engage one of the several research specialists who have been mentioned in another chapter.

Say that we made an arrangement with one of these, which we will call X-Research Corporation. The X-Research Corporation covers the United States with its agents. It has resident women in 200 or 300 towns. When we wish to look up sales conditions in a certain industry, the X Corporation sends each of these women a questionnaire of three or four pages. The women go to people of different grades of income, from the wealthiest down to the share-cropper and the Negro tenant farmer. (It is because George Gallup went about it this way that he came so close to an exact forecast of the figures in the 1936 national election.) These questions could be a complete waste of time, but they are made with great skill. If the X Corporation were trying to get information about dentifrices, it would ask, for instance, "Do you use a toothbrush?" Nearly every woman would say, "Yes." Then, "What do you put on your toothbrush?" And from the blank faces and stuttering answers, he would realize that 50 per cent of the people questioned were lying and didn't use a toothbrush. Then among those who do use a dentifrice he finds out why they use it, what they like about it (its taste, its appearance, or its price), how long they've used it, how often they change about. These questions then would be analyzed, and from the answers the agency would make a sample answer, that

is, an average of what kind of customer we would be likely to get with toothpaste advertising, and what would appeal to such a customer.

The agency, of course, would discover that the tendency is away from toothpaste and toward toothpowder, probably because of a general feeling on the part of dentists that toothpowder is better.

It is very important for the agency to find out why people switch from one toothpaste to another, because in spite of the enormous quantity of dentifrice advertising, there has not been in the last eight years any increase in manufacturers' sales. In 1929 these sales were, at their top, \$35,000,000. In 1935, because of the depression, they fell to \$25,000,000. By 1937 they climbed back to \$31,000,000. Still \$4,000,000 off the 1929 figure. Obviously, then, dentifrices are one thing people cannot afford in bad times. Perhaps, also, radio, which ate up so much dentifrice money in these years, may not be such a wonderful advertising medium as it seems.

It is not necessary to go into this any further, but you can see how the picture would be built up for a campaign on a dentifrice. Almost exactly the same procedure would be followed if we were working on an automobile account, except in such a case we would work more with men, where on canned fruit we would work exclusively with women.

4. WHAT DO PEOPLE READ?

NOW we know the kind of people who are going to buy Rosabella peaches. How are we going to reach them?

First, we've got to know how much Rosabella's going to spend. Most advertisers spend a definite percentage, sometimes of the amount of goods sold the year before and sometimes of the amount they'd like to sell during the current year. Canned fruit advertisers usually allow 6 per cent of gross sale for advertising. The heavy staples, like flour and sugar, spend only 3 per cent, but on certain specialties, the expenditure runs up to 30 or 40 per cent. Jell-O, for instance, sets aside 20 per cent for advertising. Let's say that next year Rosabella expects to spend through the Diller & Tiller agency about half a million dollars. This is among the smaller accounts, but the picture can be drawn more neatly that way. The methods are the same for both big and small accounts, except this—if the account is huge enough, as with cigarettes, you go into nearly everything.

In order to reach our Rosabella market, we've got to know what it reads. No use running our ads if they're not going to be read. We'll talk about what they listen to on the radio later. It doesn't come into this campaign because on \$500,000 we think Rosabella can't afford radio, except here and there on a local station. National radio, we believe, belongs to advertisers who can spend millions.

We do not consider billboard advertising at all because women like to have time to look over ads carefully, to read

recipes, to cut out photographs of pretty dishes. The hurried running by of billboards is useless for us. Billboard advertising is merely a reminder sort of thing and comes at the end of the advertising budget on most products.¹

Our customer for Rosabella is a woman, so we look into what women are reading. We turn first to the women's magazines, because whatever their defects, they are unquestionably trade journals for women. The women consult them as a clothing manufacturer consults *Women's Wear* or the steel trade consults *Iron Age*. The women's magazines do not provide great entertainment or even good entertainment, but what they do provide is gauged to the needs of the people who buy them. Women buy these magazines largely for their service departments and take their advice seriously in running the house.

The women's magazines are in three groups:

(1) The four leading women's magazines:

Ladies' Home Journal
Woman's Home Companion
Good Housekeeping
McCall's

(2) Popular women's magazines:

Pictorial Review
True Story

Pictorial Review in its present policy is trying to reach the wage-earner group of readers—this means the wives of workingmen and the girls who work. *True Story* is entirely

¹ Advertisers once expected great things from sponsored films, but the results have been trivial. People seem to resent them. They don't have to read the ads in a magazine, but they can't help reading those on the screen. The possibilities are so rich that there is a new drive for sponsored films and they may become important. U. S. Steel has a program of three films, with an exciting story to disguise their purpose. They're easy to make. The problem is in getting distributors to show them.

a woman's magazine, though because it has no service departments it doesn't sell as much goods as the others.

(3) Home-making group:

Needlecraft

American Home

Better Homes and Gardens

(There are also, of course, the fashionable magazines, *New Yorker*, *Vogue*, *Harper's Bazaar*, *House and Garden*, and so on. But you can see that they will not be much read by the 20 per cent we're trying to reach. The *New Yorker* especially is a good magazine on food, but perhaps rather for expensive foods or to start a fashion.)

These magazines go to more than ten million families. Their circulation has been checked, and wherever two or three magazines went to one family that was counted out, so there are over ten million separate families which read the three groups. Their strength is in the cities and towns, but they also reach about all the farmers who can afford to buy canned fruit.

The Lynds say that the modern women's magazines have been responsible for a great improvement in diet. "Through these periodicals, as well as through the daily press, billboards, and other channels, modern advertising pounds away at the habits of the Middletown housewife." So in making our estimate we consider first the women's magazines.

We know that canned fruit has a much larger sale in the cities, both big and small, than in the country.¹ I hate to

¹ In *The Progressive Grocer* of June, 1937, we get something of importance here:

"Retail trade is better in industrial districts and agricultural sections than in the cities where white collar workers predominate.

"Farm income is running about 16 per cent ahead of last year, and

spoil the good old joke about canned peaches on the farmer's table. He uses them, but he doesn't use them enough to matter. He does buy canned vegetables. Too many careless people have been poisoned by the botulinus germ and many farmers' wives have lost faith in their own canning. If we were selling something like rubber boots, we would have to go to places where there is little concentration and little ability to buy, that is, to the farm. But for our purpose we have got to have close concentration of population and ability to spend.

As part of our campaign we want to use quick news, and for this we go to the newspapers. Since we need color, we turn to two large newspaper supplements. We want to show our food in color so it will look good to eat. Advertisers have always known that color produced more returns than black and white. But until recently color photography wasn't good enough and drawings cost too much. We get color in Hearst's *American Weekly* (\$20,000 a page), published with Sunday papers in twenty-one cities—a screaming, ugly, cheap affair with more than seven million circulation. Also for color we use *This Week* (\$13,200 a page), which is a syndicated Sunday magazine supplement with a circulation of over five million in twenty-four cities. There is little duplication between these two.

The low cost per reader and the color are offered also by a group known as the Metropolitan Sunday Newspapers, which was started by the New York News. This offers seven

workmen are succeeding, through union efforts and the fact that business is better, in obtaining larger payrolls. Thus both groups have more to spend.

"But the white collar workers, as a class, have not yet enjoyed any general increase in wages."

million circulation and color for \$19,000. This is a better quantity offer than the others. But each of the supplements in the Metropolitan group is edited independently, so that it cannot promise as much "editorial co-operation." "Editorial co-operation" usually means special work with local dealers and large gobs of free editorial space. We expect lots of free space for our fruit. We expect the newspapers as well as the magazines to find ways of saying good things about us, with menus in which canned fruit plays a part, ways of using canned fruit in recipes; articles on the healthful uses of canned fruit. Here and there one will mention our product by name, but mostly they won't do that; they will merely talk about canned peaches or pineapple in a way to help us along. And if Rosabella should decide to add canned avocados to its line, all of them will suddenly publish pieces about ways to use avocado, especially in cans.

This would pretty well cover our ground on a canned fruit campaign. If we were working on an icebox account, we shouldn't bother with newspapers at all because in big cities iceboxes are usually provided by the landlord. If we were advertising something else, like sugar, or tires, we would use the newspapers heavily, as I will show later on in this chapter.

Just as we've decided that the women's magazines plus two Sunday supplements give us the best way to reach these women, along comes a different group of advertising thinkers who say that is old stuff—"The women's magazines are slipping; you're wasting your money." And here, too, comes the salesman (the "rep" in the trade) from the *Saturday Evening Post*, who says the *Saturday Evening Post* is read by two and a half million women. The solicitor from Col-

lier's Weekly proves how high a percentage of women read his magazine. This, by the way, is part of the confusion of business, since the same people own both the *Saturday Evening Post* and the *Ladies' Home Journal*, and the same group which owns *Collier's* also owns the *Woman's Home Companion*. The different branches of the same outfit fight each other bitterly. The *Collier's* salesman will point out to you all the weaknesses of women's magazines with great gusto, while the *Woman's Home Companion* "rep" will show you that no woman will buy seriously from a weekly magazine like *Collier's*.

The advertising agency doesn't take any of these claims seriously. It has its own ways of deciding on the selling power of a periodical. Advertisers depend when they can on coupons for information about reader interest. The dependence is almost pathetic. Mail order books were sold entirely by coupon, but by two kinds of coupons. One kind was an order. That was all right. Every coupon had some value. But the other kind called for a booklet or information. I learned early that all the publisher needed to do to be snowed under with such coupons was to offer something attractive free of charge. The more attractive the free offer the more coupons he got, and the less they were worth.

Many advertisers who are not in the business of direct selling by mail haven't found this out, and they have a tendency to offer most entrancing gifts to pull in coupons. Naturally the agency encourages this because the coupons keep the client happy and it's hard for him to tell how few of them turn into sales. One time the Canadian Pacific Railway offered a booklet in the *Literary Digest*. It was meant to reach schoolteachers, but the ad was so enchanting that thousands of children sent for the booklet to help

along on their geography lessons. The children didn't buy railroad tickets. It was an expensive bit of free education.

But in spite of the coupon, the women's service magazines have suffered most in the big sweep of advertising to the radio. Though some keep up their circulation, advertisers are falling away from them. The Hoover Vacuum Cleaner, for instance, advertises more in the *Saturday Evening Post* than in the *Ladies' Home Journal*. Heinz's "57 Varieties" advertises heavily in the *Saturday Evening Post*, *Collier's*, and *Liberty*. The rates in these weeklies are lower, in proportion, than in the women's service magazines. That is one thing. Another thing is, no doubt, the great change in women. Their interests are spreading outside their homes. Millions of them want to read what men read. The general weeklies are trying to appeal to women editorially. In the old days, for instance, in the *Saturday Evening Post* fiction men always came out on top; the story wound up with the woman apologizing or being in the wrong or being subdued. Now once in a while in the wind-up the woman comes out on top.

Those who argue for the weeklies say that of the *Saturday Evening Post* circulation, 40 per cent is made up of housewives. No doubt many a housewife on the *Saturday Evening Post* list subscribes for her husband. Of the *Ladies' Home Journal* readers, only half are housewives. The half who aren't housewives aren't good customers for foods or electrical devices or furnishings.

The women's magazines argue, "Yes, it is true that women read the weeklies, but when they do they're not in the right mood to buy foods. If they're reading a piece about cooking in the *Ladies' Home Journal*, then they're in

a food-buying mood, and the advertising that reaches them then is more effective."

Into this confused situation, the new photographic weeklies, *Life*, *Look*, etc., have thrown a bomb. Behind them came a string of imitators. Some of these soon began to fail. *Life*, *Look*, and *Click* were the chief and most successful. *Life* alone took hundreds of thousands of readers from *Colliers*, *Saturday Evening Post*, *Liberty*, and even from *Time*, which is owned by the same people as *Life*. Oddly, *Life's* sudden huge success with readers almost caused it to fail. The publishers expected a circulation of half a million. But with unbelievable swiftness they got a million and a half readers, and they kept the figure from going higher only by stringent efforts. Expecting only 500,000 buyers, the publishers had made an ad-rate of \$1,500 a page. Since the magazine costs more than ten cents a copy to make and circulate,¹ *Life* expected to get its profit out of advertising. Instead, it lost money on every ad-page it ran. Besides, the magazine became unwieldy and the editors had a hard job to get enough photographs to balance the advertising. The advertising had to be cut down.

In 1919 the *Saturday Evening Post* faced a similar problem. They solved it by refusing contracts for less than thirteen insertions in a year. This wasn't so good because it made enemies of the left-out advertisers. *Life* finally raised its rate to \$6,500, which is still low for the circulation. But ads dropped from 46 pages to 20 pages an issue, not enough to pay a profit.

But meantime *Life* was getting plenty of circulation and advertising away from the other weeklies. These got wor-

¹ The newsdealer pays six cents a copy.

ried. The *Saturday Evening Post*, fighting for its lost pages, checked up on the amount of time that readers gave to various magazines. (The longer time a reader spends with a periodical, the more effective it is as an advertising medium; the magazine he reads carefully is the one which is most likely to make him buy.) The *Saturday Evening Post* made a small test, merely a thousand readers, and found that of these the average reader gave two hours to the *Post* and only twenty minutes to *Life*. A thousand readers, they admitted frankly, were not enough to justify a final judgment.

They took these figures to an ad-agency space buyer, and gossip goes that they did it to jockey *Life* into a false position. Anyway, this is what happened. The space buyer showed the *Saturday Evening Post* survey to the solicitor from *Life*. At once *Life* answered the challenge with a survey of ten thousand readers. That survey showed that the readers did not give more than, say, one hour and forty minutes to the *Post*, but that it took them three-quarters of an hour to read *Life*. When the *Post*'s solicitor came around again, the agency space buyer said, "Now how about this?" Well, "this" is exactly what the *Saturday Evening Post* was waiting for. He came back strong: "Look here, Jim, how long does it take you to read *Life*?" And Jim thought it over and said, "Well, maybe ten minutes."

This little foray was a sort of boomerang to *Life*, and the *Saturday Evening Post* and *Collier's* got back a good deal of what they had lost. This story may not be exactly true. But certainly it is typical, and it shows what ad-space buyers are up against in figuring out the pulling power of a medium.

But we have decided already that on Rosabella we are not going to use any of these weeklies. We are going to stick to the women's magazines and the Sunday newspaper supplements.¹ The next thing to decide is how big our ad is going to be. Since we are going to use color, it is almost necessary for us to use full pages, but if it weren't we'd have to decide whether to use half pages, quarter pages, or full pages. We would not, on Rosabella, use smaller ads. Here, again, there are several schools of opinion. One group believes it is best to use as many periodicals as many times as possible in the course of a year. If we think that way, we take half pages in as many periodicals as our money can cover. Another advertiser believes that one magazine should be used fully. He would take a full page every month for a year in one magazine, say, *Good Housekeeping* or *Ladies' Home Journal* or *Saturday Evening Post*. And then if there was enough money, he'd cover another magazine thoroughly, and so on. So as his business grew up, he would spread out through the periodicals until everything was covered. This is the basis on which Campbell's Soup built up its enormous business.

Our problem on Rosabella is simplified because it is a seasonal product. We would not advertise canned fruit in the summer when people buy plenty of fresh fruit. So since we have only a part of the year to cover, our money will stretch to full pages in all the women's magazines and in the two big newspaper supplements, the *American Weekly* and

¹ With all its studying, its charts and investigation, the truth is that Diller & Tiller are modeling this Rosabella campaign on the advertising of Del Monte which everybody in the trade knows has been a brilliant success. Diller & Tiller use Del Monte as precedent with Rosabella. Rosabella is more impressed by this than by anything else D.T. has to say about media.

This Week, and as this allows us to have our display in full color, it does very well.

We know from experience that certain parts of the magazines are better than others. The cover pages both inside and outside are best. But these we can't get unless we reserve them a long time ahead and are willing to pay a high premium. The next best pages are those just following reading matter. It is a good thing to have our advertisement next to the runover of an important story or serial. But whether we get that depends partly on the size of our account and partly on the size of our agency—that is, how much business we can give the magazine.

All right, then; we are going to use the three main groups of women's magazines and the Sunday supplements of some of the newspapers. We think we can get good value for Rosabella money in these periodicals.

We take full pages everywhere, and here's what we pay:

	A Page
<i>Ladies' Home Journal</i>	\$12,500
<i>Woman's Home Companion</i>	11,300
<i>Good Housekeeping</i>	9,450
<i>McCall's</i>	10,510
<i>Pictorial Review</i>	11,000
<i>True Story</i>	8,250
<i>Hearst's American Weekly</i>	20,000
<i>This Week</i>	13,200

As you may have noticed, all these periodicals are circulated more or less generally throughout the United States, and that is one of the reasons we use them. The sales appeal on canned fruit is much the same all over the country. Rosabella does need some advertising locally in the cities. A branded food can't be sold effectively without it. But for

this local advertising we are depending on the chains and other local stores.

If we were pushing a product on which the local dealer did less advertising, or if we had to vary our appeal according to seasons in different parts of the country, we would be foolish to use a set of magazines of national circulation. Their use would be too rigid. We couldn't change our campaign for different local conditions, for varying climates, for closing of factories or opening of new industries.

Suppose we were advertising a brand of sugar. We would have to use more newspapers, because sugar goes to a wider public. In the big cities like New York and Chicago, it is impossible to make a complete coverage without newspapers. Newspapers all over the country have been making a strong drive to get food advertising by running pages of special food marketing news and recipes on Thursdays and Fridays, as women do the bulk of their marketing on Saturdays. As a consequence, on Thursday and Friday the newspapers have got so many food ads that other advertisers prefer to stay out on those days.

The women's pages use all sorts of devices, like cooking schools and lectures, for holding their readers. A woman lecturer goes from town to town and gives cooking lessons in the name of the local newspaper. The newspaper gives away tickets to its readers. Every food advertiser is asked to contribute some of his products, so the woman who attends the lecture carries off a big basket of sugar, cereals, canned goods, etc. This is all really nonsense. The cooking lessons are nearly always bad, the women go there to get the free goods, the advertiser knows he's not getting anything out of it, but since the paper is giving a lot of space to household and cooking news, the advertiser wants to help along.

If we were advertising tires or cigarettes, we would have to depend even more on newspapers. So we ought to know something about what the public likes in the newspapers. It might change our idea about which newspapers to use. Also, it would tell us what part of the paper we want, whether the magazine section, the funnies, the sports pages, the top of page 3, or run of the paper.

For the last ten years George Gallup has made an investigation among 100,000 people to find out which part of the newspaper they liked best. The 100,000 were all adults and were scattered among the readers of forty daily newspapers in different sections of the country. He gives the figures for women and for men separately.¹ The parts most popular with women were in this order:

- news stories
- picture page
- comic strip
- best department store ads
- comic cartoon
- amusement ads
- weather
- radio program, oddities cartoon
- love fiction
- deaths
- editorial cartoon, recipes
- banner story, love advice

Oddly, the style, society and Hollywood columns are far down on the list. The leading editorial is below these. At the bottom are sports, financial news, bridge, and book news.

For the men the order is

¹ *Advertising & Selling*, January, 1938.

news stories
picture page
comic strip
oddities cartoon
editorial cartoon
comic cartoon
weather, banner story
sports cartoon
sports column
baseball scores

As you see, the men start with the same three as the women, but what is surprising is that the leading sports story is 19th on the list. Editorials are 37th. Near the bottom come love fiction, crossword puzzles, bridge, health, and child advice. I just don't understand this sports story being 19th on the list. It doesn't jibe with a number of men I've watched reading newspapers. In fact, I don't believe it.

Other surveys show what we might deduce from our own common sense—that far fewer women than men read articles in either magazines or newspapers, and that many readers look only at the pictures.

It is interesting to compare this with British reading habits. In *Advertising & Selling* of Nov. 23, 1933, Harry H. Field says that the most popular features in American newspapers—picture page and comic strip—also top the list in Britain. Charts show almost identical agreement. The few exceptions are that women in America are more interested in the weather than English women; that in England women like the letters from readers and are much more interested in the political cartoon. The Englishman likes the radio program and the letters from readers, while the American prefers the leading sports story and the weather. But these differences are slight.

From the American surveys you might think that the picture page would be the best possible position for reaching women. But it isn't that simple. A page glanced over hastily is not as good for us as one which is carefully read. So we hesitate about the picture page. According to the survey, the woman's page is by no means the best place for a product which we wish to sell to women. Yet we know that for recipe advertising it ought to be the best place. Also, since many of the popular positions demand special rates, we have to juggle around between what our client can afford to spend and what he can afford to get.

If we use newspapers we can make our campaign stronger where needed and weaker elsewhere. To be sure, magazine circulations are distributed in proportion to prosperity, so we're paying only for the public we want to reach. But our client's sales may not depend on prosperity. Suppose again we're advertising sugar. More home canning is done in bad times than good times, and so more sugar is sold. The big canning time in Georgia begins in July; in New York it isn't until September. Well, we start our heavy sugar advertising in Georgia in July, and in New York in September.

Markets aren't blotches on maps surrounded by trading areas. Markets are people. To do the most effective selling job, it is better to know the people of the market. Minneapolis, Minnesota, is predominantly Swedish; Chattanooga, Tennessee, predominantly of American descent; New York a conglomeration of nations. Newspaper advertising gives us a chance to analyze these individual markets and to build our advertising to reach each in the best way.

Also, on newspaper advertising we can make continual tests. We try a new ad in Hartford, Connecticut, or a new premium in Wichita, Kansas, or San Jose, California. If it

goes well, we spread it over the country. If it's wrong, we haven't lost much. If we're shrewd and don't mind work, we have a continual string of these experiments going. Such tests are almost impossible in magazine advertising. Copy for a magazine like the *Ladies' Home Journal* has to be ready months ahead. Two months to get your campaign ready, four months while it's waiting to be printed, another month to find out if it's successful, and your season's gone. The advertiser who uses national magazines has to get up a campaign that looks right and then plunge.

All this testing and adaptation of copy to different regions cuts into the profits of the agency. Altogether, the running of a local newspaper campaign is much more complicated than one in national periodicals. It means much more work for the agency and for the advertiser. And it is apt to be less showy. Other advertisers are sure to see what Diller & Tiller are doing in the *Saturday Evening Post* or to hear our agency's bright stunts over Columbia Broadcasting. They may not notice our wonderful work when it appears in the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch* or the *Springfield Republican*. Every good ad for a client in a national medium is an ad also for the agency, so agency men are tempted to believe in magazines and radio.

The newspapers are worried about the competition of radio and about such lively magazines as *Time* and *Esquire*. To fight the competition, the American Newspaper Publishers Association has organized a bureau of advertising. This organization advises each newspaper to talk less about its superiority to other newspapers and to spend more time finding out facts that the advertiser needs to know.

The newspaper is willing to give a good deal of specific help to the agency and the advertiser and usually is willing

to do almost anything within reason. The newspaper ad salesman goes around to see the dealer with our ads; he interviews possible customers; he makes what are known as pantry-shelf surveys, that is, he calls on readers, looks over the kitchen and the pantry shelves and reports what's there. And like the magazines, the newspapers will give us plenty of free editorial space.

5. THE CUSTOMER—WHAT IS SHE LIKE?

THE advertising business is run with the conviction that 80 to 90 per cent of the buying in America is done by women. The women's magazines make the figure as high as 90 per cent, while even magazines edited for men admit that the percentage is very high. Men's underwear, gloves, socks, and even overcoats are often bought by women, and when they don't do the buying themselves, they usually have something to say about it. So the bulk of advertising is addressed to women. Naturally, men and women are often addressed in the same way.

The advertising manager of Sears, Roebuck probably knows better than anybody else how to sell goods by the printed word. In an interview, he said:

Some of our customers part their hair in the middle.

Some of them sleep in their underwear, some in pajamas.

Some eat pie with their knives, and some use forks.

Some of them, even in the remote country districts, are university graduates, but—

- they all get wet when it rains;
- they all bleed if you stab them;
- they all want to wear good clothes;
- they all want to be comfortable;
- they all want to escape from drudgery;
- they all want to get the most for their money;
- they all have ordinary, average human desires.

They all want to escape from drudgery, he says, and they all want to get the most for their money. Time-saving and money-saving—in short, these appeal to men and women. Perhaps they appeal to the woman a little bit more than they do to the man.

Just what is she like—this woman whose money Rosabella wants—I mean whose standard of living Rosabella wants to raise? If we ad-people at Diller & Tiller have some sense and a little advertising experience, we can guess that. But we don't guess unless the Rosabella Company happens to be a customer with mind and imagination.

Edward Bok used to tell a story about how he edited the *Ladies' Home Journal*. He said he once saw a woman in a pew in a church, and she looked to him like the kind of reader he would like for the *Ladies' Home Journal*. He never spoke to her or saw her again, but he edited the *Ladies' Home Journal* for her with huge success. What Mr. Bok did, we do, whether consciously or not.

In the agency we really depend on instinct and imagination, but we can't display our instinct and imagination to the client, so we get some facts and charts to show him and to prove we're right. If we know how, we make fine graphs. The magazines do elaborate investigations to prove the quality of their readers. Some of these naturally are toned to show what a fine magazine they are publishing and so have a certain bias, but many of them are reliable.

Let's take one, which we can trust, made by *Needlecraft* on 15,000 of its readers. This is a magazine for women who like to do work with their hands. You may never have heard of it but it has a circulation of 847,000. It goes to people who live in small towns, women who have children and put

up preserves. They're the kind of women who when they're sitting and talking to you will be embroidering a doily or knitting an afghan.

Of course, we're not considering the readers of *Needlecraft* as representative of our whole market, because most of these people live in small towns and we know that we've got a good market in the bigger cities. But just the same, for many of our customers we get a good picture from *Needlecraft*. We learn that more than half the readers of *Needlecraft* have telephones, that most of them carry insurance, that three-quarters have bathrooms, that most have electricity and electric washing-machines, practically all have a radio and a sewing machine, that about half cook with gas and about half with coal or wood. All interesting and all will make a difference in the copy we are going to write. Then we come to the figures which interest us most, since they are about food.

We learn that more than half have coffee every day, five-sixths of them bake bread, and nearly all bake cake or pie. The *Needlecraft* questionnaire asked, "How often a week do you serve homemade soup?" Out of 12,000 who answered this question, about half served homemade soup once a week. On canned soups the figure went way down. Only one woman in about eight served canned soup as much as once a week. We'd have some pretty special "educational work" to train these women to use canned soup. Then we come to what at the moment interests us most—canned fruits.

Nearly all of these readers used canned fruits. But they mentioned 425 separate brands. So in writing to them we don't bother with general arguments about canned fruits.

We merely try to get them to like Rosabella better than any other kind.

Needlecraft gives us a picture of the small-town woman.

The *Woman's Home Companion* gives us another picture—that of the woman in the larger cities. She isn't so different. The *Woman's Home Companion* has an elaborate and ingenious scheme for reporting on its readers and their tastes. From among their subscribers they have chosen a few women whom they call Reader-Editors. These women are supposed to keep the magazine closely in touch with consumer needs among typical readers. They are paid a small sum of money and are, as far as possible, typical; that is, they are housekeepers and have families. They are distributed among incomes of different grades.

Once a month the reader-editors get a questionnaire which, if properly answered, would give a clear picture of the average American household. On foods are questions like this: "When you plan a family dinner, which do you consider—balanced food values, economy, novelty, easy to prepare, quick to prepare, selecting food of contrasting colors?" Of course, it is mostly company meals that are selected for contrasting colors. The poor guest! You cannot, of course, entirely trust such questionnaires. People often give answers which save their pride. But we know perfectly well that economy and easy to prepare would probably top this list if honestly answered.¹ Another group of questions is easy to answer: "Do you go to market yourself, do you telephone your order, do you shop at neighborhood stores, do you shop at a large central market?"

¹ Most ad agencies are cynical about the ordinary questionnaire. But they are handy to show the client, and once in a while the agent gets a little idea from them. They are used to make sure we won't miss anything.

"What is the most troublesome course of a meal?" asks the questionnaire. Of the families with children, most name the meat course; next come vegetables, and third come salads. "Which desserts does the family like?" shows that most men prefer pies, women and children prefer frozen desserts. Of course, we know perfectly well without the help of the *Woman's Home Companion* or any other magazine that children prefer ice-cream to other desserts. We'd know it anyway, but we are pleased to find, if we happen to be advertising ice-cream or refrigerators, that in an investigation made among 22,416 children by the Boys' Athletic League of New York 66 per cent of the girls gave ice-cream their first choice as a dessert, and 38 per cent of the boys did the same (*New York Times*, January 14, 1938). But though we know it well, we like to have these percentages and figures so that we can present them to an unimaginative client. Cheese comes down at the bottom of each of these lists, proving once more America's curious indifference to cheese as a food. On the question about whether the woman uses flavored gelatine and why, more than half said, "to save time and work." Only a tenth used it because they liked the flavor, thus showing what we already knew—that saving of time and work is more important to the modern American housewife than taste.

To the question of whether they bought or made ice-cream, about one-half made it and one-half bought it. As to why they didn't have ice-cream oftener, over one-third said it was too expensive and about one-third said it was too much trouble to make.

On cakes, the biggest preference is for layer cakes; next come cookies and shortcakes. Doughnuts, surprisingly, are way near the bottom. To "Which do you serve—home-

made cakes or bought cakes?" two hundred and eleven baked their own cakes, only fourteen bought all cakes, but one hundred and eleven used both.

And here is what we have been waiting for. "How often do you use canned fruit for dessert?" In the winter, 67 per cent said—once a week or oftener. In the summer that went down to 48 per cent. Among families with children, the percentage was higher—73 per cent in the winter and 52 per cent in the summer. Only about 2 per cent said they never served canned fruit. The West ate more canned fruit than the East or the South.

In addition to these reader-editors, the magazine has a group of twelve superior reader-editors who go around the country from place to place seeing subscribers and making reports. These go into the consumer's kitchen and note what she uses—what kind of icebox, what kind of stove, what sort of cooking utensils. They also get a complete list of what she has in her medicine chest, on her food shelf, in her icebox, what she uses for cleaning, what cosmetics, what sort of rugs—all of this apparently as far as possible specific and precise.

These reports are, of course, a valuable guide to the editors. But they are of even more use in getting advertising. You can see how the figures I have given above would appeal to the Rosabella Company.

So we get a detailed picture of this woman whom we are trying to reach. We learn much about her that has no place in our campaign, but we are like a good novelist. We want to know a good deal more about each character than we have room for in our plan.

We find that about two-thirds of the women belong to some club or organization, that women between 41 and 50

are the most active in clubs. Four out of five read less fiction and were more interested in politics as they grew older.

Then their wishes. To "What would you like to do most regardless of time or money?" of 3,378 readers over half wanted to travel. Next came, to be a successful wife or mother. Way below was the desire to go into business or to return to it. Fourteen frustrated women wished they owned a horse, 51 wanted to dance, 2 wished to run a dude ranch, and 48 actually admitted that they were perfectly satisfied. But we doubt whether all unsatisfied wishes were frankly expressed because we know from another source that the Arrow Collar man gets thousands of fan letters from women.

Getting back to food, we find that one woman in five among these "eats her breakfast in peace" after the family is through; that one in three packs lunches for her family in the morning; then we find one in three who is indifferent to breakfast, and an occasional one who dislikes it. And finally, we discover with pleasure that about one in three sometimes actually serves canned fruit for breakfast.

We don't quite accept all this information at its face value. After all, its purpose is to prove that the magazine is a good place for our clients. But it is an indication. These two magazines are not the only ones which give us such material. All the magazines and bigger newspapers flood us with it, and most of what we get is worthless. It is too heavily loaded in favor of the periodical that sends it out. The newspapers prove that they are the best bet, and the magazines prove that we should rely on them. But perhaps the biggest flood of glossy statistics is that which proves that radio should get all our money.

Then there are elaborate reports of investigations made

by outside groups. But these vary so widely that we can put little dependence on them. For instance, one of them shows as appeals to women sex at the top of the list, with economy and efficiency at the bottom, and in addition, ambition, quality, and fear. Other reports show economy and efficiency, meaning time-saving, at the top of the list. In weighing these reports, we decide that with the housewife to whom we have to appeal, economy and efficiency come first and sex second, with envy (keeping up with the Joneses) near the top.

In dealing with men, quality seems to be much more important, and economy less important than with women. Here, too, sex is near the top. And so it is with women who are not—or not yet—housewives. At the top, I'd say.

Balancing all these one against the other, we decide to make a big play on the idea that Rosabella products save time. Also wherever we can we are going to show that the housewife is going to make a hit with her husband and he'll like her better if she serves him canned fruit. Does that sound absurd? Well, look over the advertising pages of any current magazine. These simple ideas, you will find, can look pretty sensible. At least, even if they don't look sensible to you, they make a lot of people buy a lot of products.

6. WHY THE WOMAN LIKES THE CAN OPENER

MUCH time-saving is foolish. We dash and rush and save time and don't know what to do with time when we get it. But that's not true of the average housewife. She has plenty to do with any time she can save, if only to get a bit of rest. The housewife with two children and a flat or a little house, who does all her own work, runs a complicated organization. Her business is to prepare and serve 1,095 meals a year. She has to deal with a complexity of details and decisions.

Her husband sits in an office, perhaps, and does a much more routine job. Perhaps he has to decide whether to plan a new letterhead, and should he send the office boy to deliver a message, or should he telephone or write a letter? While he's busy at this and feeling that he's doing important work in the world, his wife has to make decisions all day long, often on matters where there is little precedent. If you haven't done it yourself, you can't imagine the number of operations involved in getting three meals a day for a family of a mother and father and two or three children.

Most American families still eat three cooked meals a day. For breakfast they have eggs or cereals or meat, or all three. Many still have hot breads. For children there is a cooked dinner or lunch, and there's dinner or supper at night. The woman has to decide what she's going to have

because her family doesn't want the same thing every day. She's got to remember that Johnny doesn't like fish, unless he catches them himself, because he once choked on a fish bone, that Maizie detests carrots, and that her husband hates warmed-over dishes, but complains of her extravagances if she doesn't use up the left-overs.

The *Woman's Home Companion* questionnaire showed that one woman in three has to prepare a separate breakfast for each member of the family because each gets up at a different hour or is on a special diet. Consider the job of merely getting such a breakfast.

Suppose she's lucky and they all eat the same thing. She decides to give them fruit and a cooked cereal, eggs and coffee. If it's prunes, she has to soak the prunes and cook them the day before so that they'll be cold. If it's oatmeal, she has to cook it for a long time and be sure that sugar and cream are on hand and that the cream isn't sour. She has to scramble the eggs, to see that the coffee is in the house and ground, and that there's enough cream for that too, and enough sugar. The further operations that she has to go through if she bakes hot rolls for breakfast are too complicated to set down here. No wonder she prefers a raw cereal and tomato juice.

Of course, the children would probably rather do without the cereal, but that's something she thinks she's got to put in because she's been a good ad-reader. Mr. James W. Young, ex-advertising man and now lecturer at the University of Chicago, says:

In a carton of breakfast food he [the advertiser] may enclose an ambition to be another Babe Ruth, more satisfying to your boy than all its calories.

Well, he'd better put a dream or two in the Cream of Wheat or the cornflakes because when you buy them you're paying ten dollars a bushel for corn or wheat.

And then comes lunch, and if our housewife has children, lunch is even worse than breakfast. No wonder she welcomed what Franklin P. Adams calls the Baked Bean Era,¹ and no wonder this verse pleased her:

When Mother is tired and Baby is cross,
How happy is she to know
That Heinz Baked Beans with Tomato Sauce
May be cooked in a moment or so.

If Mother can use tomato juice out of a can to start breakfast, if she can use a prepared cereal, if she can use condensed milk that won't sour, instead of cream, if she can get her coffee already ground, she cuts out perhaps a dozen operations for the morning meal, and you can be sure she's going to do it. To a woman who has to repeat these things for three meals a day, day after day, and who besides has to do at least part of the laundry and all the cleaning, anything which will save her one or two operations is irresistible, that is, if she can afford it. If it will save her five minutes in the kitchen, it is welcome. Many a time she is willing to sacrifice taste and quality, though usually when she sacrifices quality she doesn't know she's doing it.

No wonder ads like these in the *Woman's Home Companion* have been such sales pullers—"Shorten your kitchen hours this way (Pyrex)," "Crisco saves one-third mixing time," "On your emergency quick-meal shelf—Heinz." "Just one and one-half minutes to make your own fresh mayonnaise," "Where SOS shines in double-quick time," "Make

¹ *New Yorker*, Sept. 11, 1937.

them with a richer, faster-setting new Jell-O," "Lots more time for Skipper and his mistress to frolic since this beautiful Congoleum rug went down in the kitchen," "Good-by to all that. No more hours over a hot stove cooking a corned beef dinner. I've discovered Anglo. I can prepare a meal in a jiffy."

At the same time the magazine points out how it helps advertisers with editorial pieces like: "Biscuits by the Clock," "Meals in a Jiffy," "Six quickly prepared meals." "Quick Quaker and Three Minute Oats typify the modern appeal." They say, "Meals in a Jiffy" is one of the magazine's most popular regular features.

Electric sewing—zip through a power machine goes the family sewing that once took days and nights of tiresome application.

Electric washers, driers, ironers; instant hot water; soap flakes, water softeners. They've changed Blue Monday into just another busy morning.

Better, quicker house-cleaning has come with the vacuum cleaner, sanitary floor covering, waxes and polishes; washable walls and woodwork; improved cleansing agents.

This Hormel Ham ad condenses time-saving into an excellent piece of copy:

Mother Gets Out of the Kitchen on Labor Day

Buys 2 pounds Hormel Ham,
Cuts 24 Slices—and the Meat
for Labor Day is Ready.¹

Of these time-saving devices the most important is the can. Because industrially prepared food is new, women know

¹ Advertising Procedure, by Otto Kleppner.

little about buying it. Food was the last industry taken out of the kitchen. And it's the can that has carried it out—with whirlwind speed.

Eight hundred and fifty million dollars' worth of canned goods is sold in a year. Two hundred and fifty million dollars of this goes for cans, six hundred million for their contents. This is the amount the manufacturers get. The public, of course, pays a profit on that figure.

With the coming of the can, the woman could give her family vegetables and fruit fresh all the year round, in season and out of season.

Increased use of commercially canned goods has meant not only less time spent in home canning but a marked spread in the variety and healthfulness of the diet of medium- and low-income families throughout the bulk of the year when fresh garden products are expensive . . .

As one housewife expressed it, "You just spent your summer canning in 1890, but canned goods you buy today are so good that it isn't worth your while to do so much."¹

Canned vegetables are usually cheaper than fresh vegetables. But home canning, if the woman has time, is cheaper than bought canning. In *Middletown in Transition*, the Lynds discovered that during the depression women went back to doing their own canning, and that the moment the depression was over they stopped it.

Would the women keep on canning when good times returned? "No." When the families start making money once more they will return to the tin can and its lovely lithographs. Will they continue making clothes? "Not on your life. It's easier to shop than to sew."²

¹ *Middletown*.

² From a review in *Business Week* on *Middletown in Transition*.

Except where the cook is a poor one, canned goods do not taste as good as freshly cooked foods; this although there are those who prefer canned asparagus to fresh and though canned soups satisfy many people.

In order to be canned, food has to be cooked at high temperature and cooked longer, and that's bound to destroy some of the taste and food value. In some kinds of food, the only satisfactory canning can be done with a special species. This is true of canned peaches. There are two kinds of peaches: clingstone and freestone. The freestone does not look so well when canned, although it is a better peach for drying. It softens in cooking and is apt to come out a little ragged at the edge, a little uneven and mushy. But freestone taste better than the smooth canned peaches that are so popular. Home-canned peaches also are a little soft. But the American woman has for years been demanding a sort of photographic slickness on the table. This has been largely the work of ad pictures and women's magazine pieces.

The results of the best cooking often do not look so neat and sharp. Take a croquette. To make it rigid enough to photograph, you have to add something that doesn't improve the taste—perhaps too much flour, perhaps too much white of egg. The best home-made croquette won't be so perfectly shaped as the restaurant croquette, but it will taste better. Modern housekeepers have been educated not to believe this. They want the food they serve to look like the retouched photographs in the ads. The slick canned clingstone peach does that, so they demand it rather than the softer and better freestone peach. Even so, the original canned clingstone wasn't hard or smooth enough. In order to get it canned with the present-day firmness, California

had to develop a special peach. It took years to do and it grew out of an accident on one tree. All California peaches for canning are clingstone peaches. They cannot be used for anything except canning, and are almost tasteless when eaten fresh.

Peaches have been the most popular canned fruit in America, and this, strange to say, is partly because Americans have been used to eating fresh peaches. England eats far more canned pears than peaches. Fresh peaches are so expensive there that few people have eaten them; so the canned peach is strange and novel, just as a canned guava would be here. They are used to fresh pears and so buy the canned pears.

The advertising campaigns on canned peaches have been remarkable for their common sense and their honesty. There is, of course, some exaggeration, but very little. They are based on the idea that the people who buy canned peaches like to eat them and that the woman wants to save time in her kitchen. They don't say that peaches cure acidity or rheumatism or colds in the head. But they make pictures of peaches so attractive that you want to eat them off the page.

Pineapple in the can has up to now ranked next to peaches in popularity, but it is catching up and may beat them. Perhaps the public is a little bored with peaches. It has had them a long time and wants novelties. But people can eat more of canned peaches than they can of pineapple. A more likely reason is not the public's boredom but the dealer's profits. He says he doesn't make money on national brands of canned peaches. The head of the National American Grocers Association says his members and other retailers are fighting to displace peaches with more profitable

items. On pineapple the profit is high to wholesaler, jobber, and retailer. In the spring of 1938 the peach people began to get busy with schemes to win the dealer back. Among other things they planned a \$50,000 contest in prizes for clerks.

In 1902 a man in Hawaii, named Dole, started canning pineapple. He sent two thousand cases to the United States and they went like wildfire. There was a sound reason for the popularity. The pineapple plant has only one blossom and produces one pineapple, which takes two years to mature. The ripe pineapple is easily bruised. It spoils before it can be delivered because it has to be fumigated for agricultural pests. Almost impossible to ship ripe or fresh it has to be picked unripe. So fresh pineapple as we know it is stringy and tough.

Most of the fresh pineapple we get comes from Porto Rico and is picked unripe. It has little resemblance to the taste of a pineapple picked on the spot. Canned pineapple, I am told, comes much nearer to the taste of the ripe fresh fruit. Pineapple cannot be dried. To use any large size crop pineapple must be canned.

The shipments rose from two thousand cases in 1902 to a million cases a year by 1910. This pineapple was canned in slices. Only the middle part of the fruit was used. The ends, which were just as good, were used to make alcohol or thrown away. That was a serious waste. What was done about these leftovers is really a remarkable advertising story.

A new machine picked the pineapple out from the ends. This was canned and sold as "crushed pineapple." Through it the packers got one-third more pineapple than they had before, and the grocers all bought it because it was cheaper.

But there it stuck. No woman would buy it. For years the crushed pineapple stayed on the grocers' shelves. The only way canners could get rid of it at all was to refuse to give the grocers sliced pineapple unless they took a quantity of the crushed. But that couldn't go on. The pineapple growers, who have a co-operative selling organization, put their problem into the hands of an advertising agent. His idea was to show a lot of waving palms and beautiful scenes from Hawaii. But the women didn't want to eat waving palms or beautiful scenes from Hawaii, and so the crushed pineapple gathered more dust at the grocer's.

The pineapple co-operative then turned the problem over to another advertising agency, which forgot all about palms and pretty scenes. This agency discovered that even the wives and servants of the pineapple growers would not use the crushed fruit. It was clear that women didn't buy it because they thought it a cheaper product. So the agency set out to convince women that crushed pineapple is as good as sliced. No use in merely saying that over and over again. Instead, they went at it in a fashion so simple that it showed a kind of genius.

We are packing pineapple in two forms for your convenience. Just as there are three forms of sugar—loaf, granulated, and confectioner's—which you use for different purposes, so now we have two forms of pineapple—sliced for direct table use, and crushed for other uses—for salads, and cooking.

The price was five cents a can less. It went so well that at the end of six months the grocers were sold out and the price was raised. Then abruptly the situation stood on its head. The grocers began to take the crushed pineapple by choice and the sliced only as a concession. In three years the

sale of crushed rose to nine million cases. Only two hundred fifty thousand dollars a year was spent. This is small compared to other advertising campaigns and also considering the profits, since the packers made a dollar a case on the pineapple.

In another chapter I will tell how this sensible advertising was later abandoned for a foolish patent medicine campaign.

Canned cherries are also popular, but they are pretty expensive. Also, they are a little unsatisfactory because they are likely to lose color and to get insipid. It costs a lot to pick and to pit them. Most cherries canned are sour cherries for pies. Prunes also are almost impossible to pit. In both these fruits the pits have to be left in and so fermentation is apt to keep on, the cans swell up and come back from the dealer.

Canned pears have decreased in use. To the average American stewed pears do not taste as good as peaches or pineapple and they haven't the therapeutic aura of prunes. Besides, manufacturers haven't pushed them. They cost too much to can because they must be hand-peeled and have a tendency to become too soft in cooking. They have to be sold at higher prices than peaches. The grower can sell them dried or fresh, so he doesn't bother about canning. Same with apricots.

But though price makes a difference, it is taste and time-saving which really make people buy canned fruit. Dried fruit gives the consumer nearly three times the value of fresh fruit. Nothing is paid for water, and the price is actually lower anyway. But dried fruit has to be soaked and cooked, and canned fruit is ready instantly. Much dried fruit has to be treated with sulphuric acid for color preser-

vation, and many women don't like that. So they suspect not only the fruits which are so treated, but all other dried fruits.

Prunes may be something you like or may be something you eat because you have to. Prunes cannot be successfully advertised as a dessert fruit because who can eat enough prunes for dessert to make a difference in the sale? In order to get any real sale, they must be advertised as a breakfast food, and as a breakfast food they are steadily declining in competition with orange juice and tomato juice.

Since we are following a canned fruit ad campaign in these chapters, most of this space has been given to canned fruit. The canned vegetable market is bigger and much more confused. It is a battleground where different sections of the country, different brands and different kinds of vegetables, fight with restless barbarity. Its advertising story is pointless. The story of canned soup, which is most important, you will find in the chapter *When You Order Your Dinner*.

The woman likes the can, but she would find it much more useful if its label carried an exact description of the contents. With the meek acceptance of the American shopper, she doesn't demand it. What the customer needs is labels grading qualities by the letters A, B, and C, or by standardized words. There is a movement in Congress and some legislatures for such labeling.

Grade labeling is not new. It has been successful in Canada for years. There the canners are enthusiastic about it. A & P has done some of it, but the canners as a whole are afraid. The canners in America, while doing plenty of talking about better labeling, are merely making empty ges-

tures. Listing the number of servings per can is helpful, but it isn't enough. They think that nobody would buy a can marked Grade C. Of course they wouldn't, unless the price was lower.

The canners say such a law would put them at the mercy of grafting politicians. They do not explain why grafting politicians are any more dangerous than grafting businessmen. Anyway—why this stale old excuse? It is generally admitted by food manufacturers that regulation by the Food and Drug Administration of the Department of Agriculture has been honest and actually helpful to the trade.

The canners may be showing bad judgment. There are still many women who are prejudiced against canned goods. Much of this lingering prejudice would disappear with accurate labeling.

Any new discovery in food or in anything else that is cheap, that will make life easier, can be pushed to success. Through advertising our manufacturers can create a new uniform habit in America with amazing speed, as in the smoking of cigarettes instead of cigars, the use of paper towels, the drinking of orange and tomato juice, the use of electric iceboxes. A habit of living can be changed almost overnight. No such swiftness is possible in Europe because there there is no way of reaching everybody through one kind of advertising.

But in an interview, Bruce Barton, worried about Congress and the New Deal, says: ¹

The country is too big and too complex to be managed as a planned economy.

¹ New York Times, Dec. 21, 1937.

There speaks the newly elected Congressman. As an advertising man of nearly thirty years' experience, Mr. Barton knows perfectly well that this country is not too big or too complex to be trained swiftly into using a new food, or a new car, trying a new icebox or a new vacuum cleaner. He knows that through advertising it is possible to turn this country into complete uniformity in daily habits. He must know this because his advertising business is based on it. Every advertising campaign is a sort of private planned economy.

7. AD-WRITING—OLD AND NEW

AND now we come to the only part of the agency's job on Rosabella which the public sees—the words, or copy, and the pictures.

In smaller and more human agencies, one person conceives and directs both. A copy writer thinks up the scheme of the ad, gets an artist to make a rough layout. Then he writes the headline and words to carry out the idea. Both are shown to the Rosabella Company. But the assembly line has crept into the ad agency. In some of the larger agencies, a group of executives plans the layouts and general talk. The copy writer is a robot ordered to fill in a few inches with words. Advertisers whose copy is written that way are getting machine-made goods for their money.

But at Diller & Tiller the copy writers do real jobs. They have to take the expensive space—sometimes it costs \$120 an inch—and fill it with words and pictures that will open up your pocketbook. Every word, even the one in the smallest type, has to be carefully worked over. It is Sears, Roebuck's experience that people read every word of description about the products which they order. And even when he's going to see the product in a store before putting up his money, one person in ten probably reads every word. No time or room for fancy doings, the style has to be muscular, the drive heavy, the language simple. Do not blame the ad-writer if the advertising you read is beneath the level of your intelligence. Remember the average men-

tal age of the public, and remember, too, that advertising is read fast if at all. Nobody is going to sit down and analyze what we say if he doesn't get it at first glance. It takes long practice to write simply enough to be understood by simple minds. Every word has to say something. Out of this lean ad-style has come much modern writing. Advertising had to come first before the magazine *Time* could conceive its hard and economical style, which in its turn has helped many another writer.¹ Much of the packed punch in today's novels can be traced to ad-writing technique.

Ad-writing is both easier and harder than it used to be. A number of psychological patterns have been set. Tests and experience save many a headache. But it's harder to find new ways of saying the old stuff. Besides, legislatures, both national and state, have passed some laws which keep the ad-writers of today from our old glorious freedom to lie as much as we liked. Sometimes they cannot even use the old dodge of telling part of the truth if it gives a false picture, especially if the Federal Trade Commission doesn't like the manner of telling, or if the agency isn't as slick as some others.

In the 1880's and '90's magazine ads were by-products and a small part of publishing. The editors and owners of magazines would have been surprised if you had told them that they must consider the advertiser. They carried little advertising. Yet considering their time, they are all of about the same grade—no better and no worse than the magazines of today. You can draw any conclusions you like from that.

The ads were both ugly and dull. Through the years,

¹ Including myself.

their tone grew more nervous and crisp, their illustrations sharper and better. It seems quite possible that people today might miss the vivid and romantic nonsense of our advertising pages if they were cut out.

I have some copies of the *Woman's Home Companion* and *Ladies' Home Journal* for 1913, 1921, 1931 and 1937. The 1913 ads which we at that time thought sensational seem quiet and reserved. Gold Medal showed merely a picture of a bag of flour. Ivory Soap was already 99.44% pure, but got along without models. I came across one ad I wrote myself—it was among the most blatant: "Do you sleep in a bedroom with dirty walls?"—about a wall covering called Sanitas.

Colgate's Dental Cream ad said: "Clean, pleasant flavor checks decay." How mild and helpless this sounds in today's barrage of toothy forebodings. Quaker Oats called itself "Scotland's favorite oatmeal." Woodbury's Soap, though, had one which seems to be the first soap ad of a patent medicine nature: "Have you ever used soap prepared by a skin specialist?" Royal Baking Powder even then realized that the most powerful appeal to women was the saving of work. In 1921 it also had the best copy with "Foods that please the man," and with recipes. This combined the practical with the sentimental—a good mixture.

In 1921, at last women are being shown in corsets, and the patent medicine food scheme begins to peep out. Sun-maid Raisins: "Raisins are a beauty food, due to their iron content." Jergen's goes completely romantic with "The face that one remembers in a crowd." And an enormous step ahead—Kotex is advertised. Pink toothbrush arrived in 1922.

In 1931, the Eminent Dermatologist begins to appear.

Pond's Vanishing Cream goes on with its tireless and tiresome commendation campaign with good words from Miss Anne Morgan, Mrs. Alexander Hamilton, Mrs. Pierpont Morgan Hamilton. "Beautiful women of the House of Morgan," and other social lights. Silliest of these advertisements was the one which showed Lady Asquith's sharp, homely face as an example to girls who wanted to be pretty. In the same issue, was a Pond's "Extract Tissue" advertisement with another photograph of Miss Morgan. Post Toasties becomes "The wake-up food," and Pet Milk absurdly claims to be "Better than cream. . . ." About this time the camera lens, the scientists, the X-rays, all go busily to work. The ads are full of secrets blared forth in red and blue and green—secrets of beauty, of health. Odorono begins to ". . . resent this man's statements," and Armour's Cornflakes calls itself "Substantial," one particular quality which cornflakes do not possess.

The years roll around and by 1937 "Irium" suddenly appears in toothpaste. The Dionne quintuplets are all over the place with their charming smiles. Pond's is still going in for commendations, but by this time they're British duchesses. Vitamin D is on the job, and B and C, and all the others from A to Z, or to G anyway. Daggett & Ramsdell with startling originality go back to old honesty—"A clean face is the secret of radiant beauty." Colgate's Cashmere Bouquet soap, so many years among the most dignified of advertisers, now yawns with the others: "Lucky for me I learned this lovelier way to avoid offending." "Don't risk losing love." More and more intimate and more offensive grow the ads. Absorbine Jr. is among the least pleasant with "How a bride gave her husband Athlete's Foot. She was a carrier." But whatever the smudge on the ad-

writing, the type and pictures had for the last few years looked steadily cleaner and more agreeable.

An odd tendency in advertising in 1937-38 has been a back track from the beautiful to the ugly. In the early days most advertising was unlovely in appearance. There was as yet no special race of advertising artists; we knew little about type. Neither photography nor reproduction was very good. Anyway, the trend of the time in clothes, furniture, building, was ugly. Our whole aim was to crowd just as much matter into one ad as possible. We used what pictures we could get cheap. Sometimes we paid five or ten dollars for a drawing. Our headlines were usually set in heavy Gothic type. The results were black and messy. But we didn't all do this just because we knew no better. Experience had showed us that the public liked a crowded, ugly ad. The screaming emphasis gave them a sense of vigor and the crowded space made them think they were getting a lot for their money.

Then along came the beautiful ads. Earnest Elmo Calkins had as much to do with bringing them in as anybody else. Year by year the advertising pages got better-looking. Mr. Calkins built an excellent reputation for himself and his agency did good business.

Now to my surprise I find what is supposed to be a new tendency in the ad-writing and pictures—the Getchell idea. Mr. Getchell has built up a huge success on it, but as far as the type is concerned, it's the same thing we used in our early days before beauty got to be in fashion. The sales appeal is the same. What is new in the Getchell idea is his able use of modern action photographs. His advertising started a fashion, and now if you will look through your newspapers and magazines, you will see pages full of action

pictures and big black Gothic type—ugly pages that stare, that leap out at you, that crowd out the editorial stories and articles. “The impression they make” is just the same as that of the stand-bys of 1910. This screaming, direct, ugly stuff hits the public as hard as ever. The Lucky Strike ads along this line, hideous as they were, had vitality and force. It is easy to be so dignified in advertising that you don’t get anywhere.

Whatever we may say about the copy or the ideas in modern advertising, certainly the pictures are far better than they have ever been before.¹ Mostly, that is due to the advance in photography. *Printers’ Ink* says that twenty years ago the illustrations of men’s clothing looked as though the men were dressed in a fine, tin suit, sawed and hammered to fit. In 1920, the figures were obviously posed, and the faces insipid. There’s action in photographs today. Still, I think that’s hardly an excuse for the toothy grins of morons that come by the dozens in magazine and newspaper. Sometimes in dentifrice advertisements there’s a pretty girl who keeps her mouth closed because she is ashamed to show her gums. She looks much prettier and is a rest after all the gummy smiles.

Photographs as a rule sell goods far better than drawings. To show an automobile in action, for instance, a photograph is better than any drawing. But Chevrolet found drawings better in 1935 when they showed a picture of the

. . . automobile which gave the impression of its belonging distinctly to the class of luxury cars. One generally accepted

¹ Illustrations must emphasize the product or they will play tricks. A linoleum ad showed a boy’s room with a ship’s model on a shelf. The advertiser got a number of inquiries—for the ship’s model. (*Advertising Procedure*, by Otto Kleppner.)

characteristic of a luxury car is a long, sleek appearance. When this picture of the Chevrolet was measured carefully, it was found to be represented as having a wheel base of 142 inches. The automobile in actuality has a wheel base of 107 inches. There was an exaggeration of about one-third, or 35 inches, which can hardly be claimed to be a small one or to belong to what the Editor of *Time* has been pleased to call "the inevitable dramatization" of advertising. The size of tires in the picture of the Chevrolet was likewise exaggerated.¹

On food, too, photographs are best because they must come as near reality as possible. Before the improvement of color photography, a color drawing of food used to cost sometimes as much as a thousand dollars. Now it's possible to take photographs in full color which sell more goods. A first-class photograph of a bowl of walnuts or a strawberry shortcake sometimes costs three or four hundred dollars, and with people in it as much as five hundred dollars. Occasionally, where there are groups of dishes, drawings still get a better perspective.

For clothes, photographs are not effective because the natural proportions of women do not look fashionable. Women have become used to the distorted proportions of fashion drawings, where the body is eight to ten times the size of the head, instead of six times, as in life.

In the actual writing of copy, the advertising man seems to have learned little. But one type now fashionable is entirely new. That is the use of funnies or serial pictures. You can see them wherever you look. They are highly successful. Ivory Flakes had one: "Twins' Love Plot Foiled," the adventures of two blondes and how the boy-friend knew

¹ *Guinea Pigs No More*, by J. B. Matthews.

them apart because one used Ivory Flakes and her sweater didn't shrink.

Ad-writing isn't anything that can be taught—it is an instinctive talent based on a combination of intuition and facility with the pen. If each piece of copy had to be signed by its writer, I believed that many of the best ad-writers would go into other work. Anonymous is a writer who can stand behind almost anything. An odd thing. When they first begin working on a new account, copy writers have a tendency to believe in what they're saying about the product. They smoke the cigarette, use the razor, apply the rouge, make the maid use the vacuum cleaner.

It is possible to learn about the technique of copy writing, but not how to use the technique. Advertising has nothing to do with literature.¹ It is instead closely related to preaching. In the advertising pages you are talking to somebody; you're not writing an essay. Simplest method is to write it like a letter. The writing of a circular letter is much more difficult than the writing of a good ad. I think I was lucky. The first copy writing I did was on such circular letters. I learned so much from them that regular copy came naturally later on.

Otto Kleppner, in his excellent book, *Advertising Procedure*, says that the new writer is tempted to preach to the multitude instead of to the individual reader, and as a sample of such mob preachment, he quotes: "Use this dictating machine service in your offices and help the nation's tide of progress." He goes on to show how much more effective it would be to say: "It does your present work at just half the cost."

¹ In ad-slang, circulars and other printed matter are also called *literature*.

Another mistake—according to Mr. Kleppner—is to write the stuff from the manufacturer's point of view rather than from the reader's. Here are the two contrasting ideas. Wrong—"We announce the sale of beaverboard made of the quality for which this house is renowned," and, Right—"Change your attic into a playroom with beaverboard." It's bad practice to talk too much about how much better one bread is than other brands of bread. Much shrewder to give people reasons why they should eat more bread instead of more meat, eggs, potatoes, or other kinds of food.

A brilliant ad-man I know says to his copy men: "Now, imagine that you're a salesman knocking at a woman's door. Suppose you started to say, 'Madam, Morning Glow Butter comes from fresh, green fields.' She would think that you had broken loose from an asylum. Your ads must sound as though you were saying: 'I'm coming to help you. I look pleasant, but the important thing is that I want to help you start today more easily.'"

Another time he said: "I write to the woman in this tone: 'I'm just a friend of yours. I'm not showing you any tricks. I'm not any brighter than you are, but here's something I think will help you and don't you want to look into it?'"

Almost all experienced advertising people will agree that for large-scale production it is a mistake to be smart-alecky, and usually a mistake to be funny. Occasionally a really funny ad in a magazine for bright people does go over, but the laborious efforts of some ads in the *New Yorker* are pretty painful, both as to advertising value and humor.¹

Many an advertisement which you as a reader think bril-

¹ The so-called funnies, that is, the strip ads, are, of course, not intended to be humorous.

liant is no good at all. It isn't hard to attract a lot of attention and yet sell no goods. The best ads aren't the ones about which you say, "Isn't that clever?" but the ones which make you take out your pocketbook and buy something. You can, however, be as clever as you like in imperceptible ways. The J. Walter Thompson agency is both sound and clever in selling Simmons' Beds. Their campaign is not to sell beds, but to sell a better night's sleep. It sells the beds.

With all the passion for research that has been going on in the advertising business, naturally a good many investigators have gone from door to door and a good many questionnaires have been mailed to find out which ads the readers like. It is hard to tell when you're running a series of twelve advertisements which is selling goods and which isn't. There is no way of definitely tracing results of one piece of copy unless by some special offer—like a premium or prize contest. Even then you can't tell whether you're selling more goods or merely handing out presents.

In one such investigation by the Market Research Corporation of America in 1935, 10,000 housewives were interviewed. The investigator asked the woman which ads she liked. At the top of the list came Knox Gelatine with 100 per cent. Every woman liked the Knox Gelatine advertising. Next came Del Monte with 99.6 per cent. And then California Walnut Growers and Sunkist Oranges with 99 per cent each. For all practical purposes, all the women liked these. Next, with 98 per cent, were Campbell's Soups, Heinz, Pillsbury Flour. Then we go on down until we find 57 per cent for American Tobacco, Pepsodent, and Spuds; while even lower came Lever Bros.' Lifebuoy Soap, Camel cigarettes, Bristol-Myers (patent medicine), and Listerine.

After these comes an abrupt drop—only 2 per cent liked the advertising of Kotex. This, no doubt, is an ancient prejudice cropping up and shows what a difference there may be between what a woman likes in an ad and what makes her buy. Though the figures are weak when it comes to Kotex, because of prejudice, they really mean something for the other advertisers on the list. Unquestionably, there is a close connection between the liking of the women and their buying. It is well-known that these campaigns have been rated successful almost exactly in the order here given.

It is impossible to depend on any questionnaire altogether, but the tenor of these figures is unmistakable. The women like practical advertising, which they think helps them with their housework. The three tops on this list all contained recipes. And women prefer their ads in color.

The same investigation showed that the advertising of foods, food beverages, and soft drinks makes the most favorable impression on women. Next come cigars, cigarettes and tobacco, and at the bottom of the list alcohol and petroleum products. This also fits in neatly with sales figures. It isn't usually the woman who picks out either the alcohol or petroleum product for the family.

A woman wrote in *Printers' Ink* (June 10, 1937) that she thought tricks defeated their purpose, that ads didn't influence her when "they let a cute dog, a chubby child, or some accessory steal the show so that I can't even recall what they're advertising." She finds that a car looks more attractive with people in it. This woman says, too, that she doesn't like details in descriptions of refrigerators, but she was interested when a friend showed her what her refrigerator could do in the way of crisper salads, ice cubes, dessert. She wants to know what a refrigerator will do—not how it

works. This would, of course, be true of most women on all gadgets.

A new scheme fashionable among advertisers now is called the Townsend Plan—nothing to do with our old \$200-a-month friend. The Townsends are two brothers who for two per cent of your advertising expenditure will check over copy and pictures and rate them according to a number of arbitrary classifications. Some advertisers like this. One advertiser, asked why he thought the Townsends could judge his ads better than he could himself, said, "Maybe they can't, but it gives our advertising manager something to fight you agency people with. You get ten and twenty thousand dollars a year, and he gets only five. With this Townsend Plan analysis he can stand up to you boys."

But with all these elaborate investigations, what have they dug up that a man or woman with intuition wouldn't know anyhow? Anybody who has to go to research to learn these things ought not to be writing copy. Good copy, after all, depends on emotion, and emotion cannot be put down in diagrams or graphs or questions and answers. The good copy writer, like the good preacher or novelist, has to be able to feel like the other fellow.

We can exaggerate as much as we like in writing advertising if we know how to do it. If we say a product is the finest in the world, that gets by. If we call a movie "the finest picture in the world," the motion picture board has no objection. But if we say that the picture is one of the ten that will win the prize next year, the motion picture board calls us a liar. We can shriek and yell, we can claim almost anything and be believed; but if we talk reasonably, we've got to prove everything that we say. But, of course, that is by no means restricted to advertising.

It is so easy to find foolish advertisements that it is hardly worth the trouble. Take one of a costume advertised by Milgrim's in a New York newspaper. It sold for \$295 and the heading was—"Designed by Milgrim with you in mind." Would the most foolish woman in the world believe that?

And if the advertising seems raucous to you, you must remember that nobody wants to buy Rosabella. People have all they can do to get along on their money as it is. We've got to force Rosabella on to their kitchen shelves in place of another dessert. Bruce Barton likes to think that "Advertising is the voice of business's better self." That makes it look pretty bad for business. But J. P. Derum, another advertising man, thinks differently. He says: ¹

After all, this is a very vulgar world.

It is an extremely credulous world.

It is an exceedingly sex-conscious world.

Advertising is neither above nor below other business in its ethical levels. It is, as I said before, merely an employee of business. It represents business in one way just as the lawyer does in another, and has the same limited responsibility for its actions. But also like the lawyer, advertising lays itself open because it holds itself above business, without any justification.

¹ *Advertising & Selling*, Sept. 15, 1932.

8. BETWEEN YOU AND THE MANUFACTURER

FINE though our campaign may be on Rosabella canned fruit, it is money thrown out of the window if we can't get the retailer interested in it. It is through him that Rosabella passes from the manufacturer to you.

The middleman costs you money, but he cannot simply be whisked away because he has no reasonable place in a proper social system. As things stand now, he does certain work for you which you have to pay for. His place, his job, and his profits vary in different industries.

Nearly all the advertising you read and hear is planned with the retailer in mind.

The bulk of the retail trade in this country is done by food and drug stores and of these food takes first place. The food and drug situation is pretty typical. There are groups which do not fit into this regular retail picture. See Chapter 17 for the automobile dealer situation, which applies also in a general way to refrigerators, washing-machines, etc. Luxury trades are in a class by themselves. On flowers, the grower sells through jobbers for a 15 per cent commission. But the jobbers are apt to juggle prices so the small grower is in a bad way. Only large growers can hold their own. The retailer here is better off than the grower. He has trouble with the fly-by-night florists who come into town for Mother's Day, Christmas, and Easter, but he has no chain stores to compete with. He can add to his income

by the use of taste. If he's an expert in his business, the customer asks his advice and is willing to pay for it. This general layout would be the same for many luxury trades.

But all retailing—even automobiles—is insignificant by the side of food and drugs. That's the picture we will draw here. Largest in number of all are the grocers. So I've chosen here to give a detailed picture of the grocery trade, and from that you can build up your own picture of others.

In talking of food products, the *manufacturer* is the concern which buys the material from the growers and gets it ready for consumption. And the consumer, or customer, is the *woman*. So whether it's peas in cans or oranges in the skin, we'll call the group at one end the manufacturer and at the other the woman.

Once upon a time the manufacturer dealt directly with the woman. He milled his flour and sold it down the road. Then the road got too long and he sold it to her through a retail store. In those days the storekeeper knew his goods and was really a sort of purchasing agent. He was technically skilled in buying. At the next step, the little retail store was too far away and the manufacturer had to deal with a jobber or wholesaler. That's where we stand now. The average modern grocer knows nothing. He doesn't have to. He waits for some woman to come in and ask for something, and when she consults him about its quality he doesn't know how to answer.

The dealer situation in the grocery trade is a mass of squirming, changing, shifting maggots. Small retailers in all trades fail in startling numbers. But small retail grocers fail even faster than other retailers. Little Bacigalupo is an assembler at the plant. He marries a girl whose father gives her three hundred dollars as a dowry, so he and the girl

open a grocery store. They know nothing about it, and the only question is whether they will have to close down in one month or in six months. Small retail grocers have probably the lowest intelligence of any group of businessmen. And they have to give credit extensively to their customers. This is as true in poor neighborhoods as in rich ones. It is a complex business where each store deals with hundreds, even thousands, of items, and there is no cost accounting among the smaller people.

In Vermont I lived a few miles from a general country store which sold shoes and rakes and soap and ham. The storekeeper knew a lot about rakes because he had a garden. Of the rest he knew nothing. I was surprised to discover that he had no notion of what was a good ham or a poor one, or what was good coffee. He took what the jobber in the nearest city advised him to take.

He had a great respect for advertised names. Left alone, he'd sell nothing else, even though his profit is small. But the farmers around there are pretty fussy about price. So the manufacturer packs something he calls a "fighting brand." Suppose for nation-wide sale the manufacturer advertises Key Brand condensed milk. But there are a lot of local condenseries in Vermont and in the heavy season they also condense milk. The manufacturer can't afford to meet their prices on his Key Brand. When the little grocer can't afford to push the Key Brand at ten cents because he sells the local condensed milk for five, Key Brand may put out a cut-price line which it calls, perhaps, the Polly Brand.

According to the law, canned milk has to have a certain percentage of butter fat, so that cannot be reduced. But sometimes the milk has been burned a little in the course of manufacture of the national brand. Sometimes there's a

little less in the can. The Key Brand salesman says: "I've got Polly Brand I'll sell you at five cents." The manufacturer makes no profit on Polly and does no advertising, but it keeps the grocer among his customers. And later he gets him back on the higher-priced Key Brand.

The woman knows little more about the food she's buying than the retailer across the counter. She has lost much of the skill which she had in the old days. Food was the last thing taken out of the kitchen. Weaving, candle-making, soap-making, all these came out long ago. But food in a big way made its exit in the last thirty-five or forty years. That's why the woman knows so little of her business of buying prepared foods. The job of selecting her food is neither hers nor her retail grocer's, but the jobber's and the manufacturer's, who are busy with their own interests and not with hers.

But the manufacturer must reach the woman. So he goes directly to her in a new way. He does it by advertising. Not long ago a manufacturer of canned fruit took a page advertisement in the *American Weekly* and in *This Week*, saying that "For the next three days your grocer is participating in the (name of brand) March of Flavors." One chain of grocers, in each of its stores, sold three cans a minute for three days.

But in order to make his advertising work, the manufacturer has to get his goods to the retail grocer. There are several ways that he can go about it.

The manufacturer's dream of Utopia is to have his own sales organization, with his own salesmen to call on retail stores. The H. J. Heinz Company and Standard Brands each has such an outfit. Each has its own warehouses in various cities to carry its stock, and its own trucks to deliver

to the grocers. This is direct selling. Some of the other larger combinations, like the General Foods Corporation, are tending in that direction. Others have it in part—perhaps in their headquarters cities.

Heinz can do it and so can General Foods because they have a large line of products, so that the salesman takes orders for and the truck delivers several items at a time.

Let us take an outfit at the other extreme from the H. J. Heinz Company, one that sells a single product, like Bon Ami. Such a manufacturer has no salesman or trucks of his own. He can't afford to. He can't send a man to take an order for six cases here and a dozen there. He can't send a truck to deliver half a dozen at this corner and a dozen further on. It wouldn't pay him to start the motor or hitch up the horses. So he has to deal with brokers, with wholesalers, with jobbers. Between him and the woman stands a whole row of middlemen.

First, situated in key cities, come the brokers. The brokers are not employees of the manufacturers; they are entrepreneurs themselves. A city like Denver in the food business alone would have several brokers—Brown Bros., Smith Bros., Jones Bros. These food brokers then are manufacturers' representatives, and each of them represents several non-competing manufacturers. Brown will take C. & H. sugar, Smith might represent Sea Island sugar, and Jones, American Sugar Refining Company. Each broker has to have some canned food line, so this one represents Del Monte, this one S. and W., and this one Haas Bros. Each of them would probably handle some cereal. One takes the Post group, another Kellogg's, another Ralston's. Each of them would like to have a soap; one takes the P. & G. group, another the Fels line, another Colgate's. Because

the broker has several lines to represent, he can afford to have an organization and some salesmen to go out and call—no, not on the retailer, but on the *jobber*.

The *jobber* is the next step, and in a city like Denver there may be a half dozen *jobbers*. These handle all the stocks and all the brands they can handle profitably—no question of competition or non-competition. So each broker will try to make every one of these *jobbers* his customer. He will have three kinds of sugar, perhaps five or six kinds of canned goods, all the cereals, all the soaps. He employs salesmen who call on the retail trade. Do you notice that this is the third set of salesmen between you and a pound of sugar or a bag of flour? Manufacturer to broker, broker to *jobber*, *jobber* to retailer.

The brokers carry no stock. They call up the various *jobbers*, "How's your sugar today?" and the *jobber* says, "I'd better have 100 pounds of C. & H." Then the broker gathers all his sugar orders and sends them to C. & H. The broker makes no deliveries. The manufacturer delivers the sugar and bill to the *jobber*. The broker earns his brokerage, or commission, not by handling money or goods, but simply as a manufacturer's representative.

The *jobbers* perform a more useful function—warehousing, extension of credit, delivery to the retailer.

Now at last, limpingly we come to the retailer. There are half a million grocery retailers in the country. Each *jobber* tries to have as many customers among the retailers as he can line up. So a retailer will have one, two, three or even half a dozen *jobbers* calling on him.

The *jobber's* salesman isn't much more than an order taker, because he has so many items to sell. He may have five hundred articles, and most of them are made by sev-

eral competing manufacturers. So all he can do is to go into the store, look over the stock, say, "Well, I see you're low on this," or "Next week, you know, the new crop of walnuts is coming in," and then he writes down his orders. About the time he's out of the door, another jobber's salesman is on the scene, trying to find out what's left for him. Or he tries to get in first.

But all jobbers do not have salesmen.

There's the mail order jobber. Instead of sending out salesmen he issues a catalog, especially to outlying districts. Then there is the cash and carry jobber, who came into being with the growth of the chain stores. This jobber says, "If you want to come down to my warehouse and pick up what you need and take it home to your store, I can knock off my salesman's salary, selling expense, credit charge, etc."

The Buying Exchange (or Voluntary Chain) is a co-operative form of jobbing born when the independents found they were being pushed to the wall because of the superior buying power of the chains. There are two kinds of voluntary chains—one organized and owned by independent dealers, the other by wholesalers for their customers among the retailers. These two groups, in the spring of 1938, controlled 110,000 retail outlets. One of them, the Frankford Grocers Association, represents 2,200 stores and can buy more cheaply than A & P.¹ Each grocer joins as if he were a stockholder, buying one share of stock. The Buying Exchange becomes his jobber and can serve hundreds of stores. Red and White is one of the biggest of the buying exchanges. Independent Grocers Alliance is another.

The jobbers don't get their retailers into such groups out

¹ *Fortune*, April, 1938.

of philanthropy. Each one through his organized retailers builds up strong private brands of various products. A private brand as opposed to a national brand is one which is sold by a wholesaler only to his own group. The retailer likes these because the margins are high while margins on nationally advertised brands are small and sometimes even nothing at all. The wholesaler binds the retailer to him so he can't break away and buy other private brands. White Rose is such a private brand. Some of them have big sales. Macy's for the last few months has begun to sell private brand drugs to retailers in other cities. It is possible that they will extend this to groceries, with their private Lily White brand.

The co-operative buys in volume, getting all the chain stores' advantages of unified buying. Naturally the Buying Exchange develops into a guide for its members. It anticipates conditions to a certain degree, assembles for delivery, handles invoicing, delivers and does a certain amount of bill collecting. These co-operatives, or voluntary chains, make their greatest appeal to the middle-size grocer. "The vast horde of small, unprogressive grocers is beyond the help of even the voluntary chain, and the large ones do not feel the need of such help."¹

The chain store tries to be all the middlemen functioning in itself and deals directly with the manufacturer or through the manufacturer's broker in the market. For cutting out the jobber's commission it demands and gets better prices from the manufacturer.

The jobbers in each of the groups described seldom have any price advantage over each other on staple foods. On

¹ C. W. Dipman, Editor of *The Progressive Grocer*, in "Grocery Trade News," June 5, 1933.

bulk goods, there may be some variation, depending on how well the jobber has bought, or what has happened to the market. Sugar, for example, is like wheat. It's a world commodity. Prices are not determined by local conditions. One jobber may have put in an order for a big shipment just before prices went up. He can undersell his competitors as long as his lucky purchase lasts. But staple commodities and advertised package goods haven't that variation.

The retail grocer really deals with the jobber just about as you do when you're driving down the highway and there are ten service stations. You like this fellow, and he's treated you right—he "fixed a flat" for you last week. So in the grocery jobbing business. One jobber may be lenient in his credit, and another may have pinched the retailer once when he was in a tight spot. Perhaps the salesman is his brother-in-law or something. Maybe once the retailer had ten cases of cereal left on his hands and some jobber took it back and gave him a fifty per cent credit.

Now about the retail grocer himself. There are all kinds. There is the service type of grocer. He is an independent dealer. He owns his own store. He performs all the services connected with the grocery business, takes orders over the telephone, in some cases has solicitors calling on the woman and taking orders. He delivers the goods. He carries credit. Sometimes he feeds families when they're out of work and carries them. That's the independent service type of grocer.

Then there are the large chain store organizations. They are of several kinds. For instance, the Atlantic & Pacific performs certain retail services. It has a man who waits on you when you come in the store, who picks what you want off the shelf. Or you can order by telephone.

At the extreme end is the former Piggly-Wiggly Corporation, now a subsidiary of The Kroger Grocery Baking Company. You walk in, pick up a basket, go around the shelves, take off what you want. The only service performed, except on butter and cheese, is that goods is set out for you to look at. Many A & P stores are now developing towards the same kind of self-service store.

Naturally, the full-service type of retailer has more expenses and expects and is entitled to a larger margin. The man who performs no services presumably has less expenses and, therefore, can charge less for his goods.

The chain store is able to perform a service for the consumer that the independent dealers cannot perform, and that is large-scale buying. It cuts out the various steps between manufacturer and consumer—the jobber, the broker. The chains do it all themselves.

But it takes more money to set up a Piggly-Wiggly store than it does to operate like the usual independent retail grocer, who can open up in his front parlor. There has to be special equipment, turnstiles, cash registers, and the goods must be displayed.

I have given no space to consumers' co-operatives because, as they stand now, they are not an important part of the retail set-up. Their fight has been a fierce one because they came a little late in our development. When the Rochdale stores in England acquired their growth, there was no Sears, Roebuck or Montgomery Ward to compete with. The wholesalers and manufacturers do not consider the consumers' co-operatives at all in their larger plans, nor do they worry about them.

Perhaps they'd better start a little worrying. The consumers' co-operatives are gaining steadily, if slowly. Adver-

tising Age gives the 1936 volume of consumers' co-operatives sales as \$182,000,000. Roger Babson warned his subscribers that "merchants who laugh off these consumers' crusades are sitting on dynamite."¹

The middleman expects to be paid for his work either in margin of profit or in brokerage. The manufacturer figures it out—this for the broker, this for the jobber, this for the retailer. It's a business of the shaving of pennies. The manufacturer has to set a price on his goods to the man who buys from him, and yet allow for the further spread between that man and the woman at the other end. Suppose it costs him five cents² (including profit) to make a can of soup and the woman is willing to pay eight cents. If he could hand it to the woman, he would get eight cents. But he can't afford to do that. And from the other end, every time that the woman does a service for herself, she pays that much less for a product. In other words, if the woman were willing to go to the little town where Mr. Jones makes Bubble Brand Soup, and say to him, "Give me a can of soup," she'd get it for five cents, but she can't afford to, so she's willing to pay eight cents for her can of soup.

The retailer also gets some service from the string of middlemen. He gets advice. He needs someone to act as a commercial guide, because he can't watch the stock—he doesn't know the seasons—he can't know that it's raining in Hawaii and therefore that pineapple or sugar may go up or down. He needs someone to say, "Peaches are good in Georgia, so North Carolina will be a drug on the market," or "The price is going up next week on salmon."

¹ *New Republic*, May 6, 1936.

² These figures are quite imaginary. It is impossible to set exact figures for such goods because the prices for the raw products vary so much.

He needs someone to tell him how to increase his sales, to say, "Look here, Bill, this business of keeping the stuff under the counter is suicide. The chain stores are displaying it." Or "This store of yours needs some painting." Besides, someone has to anticipate his needs and carry stock for him. Green peas are canned in the spring and some canners sell out their entire stock before it's even packed. The retailer is not in a position to buy it. Someone has got to be ready for that and hold it in stock, so when the retailer begins to sell peas in October or November he can get them.

Imagine a man on Main Street who needs a few bags of flour, a few cans of fruit, a small stock of soap. The absurdity of having these dribble in from all parts of the country from the various manufacturers is patent enough. Someone has got to assemble in one place the shipments from a dozen manufacturers who send from different parts of the country, and deliver them to the retailer. Somebody has to send out bills and collect money. The manufacturer of one brand of soap obviously can't bill each grocer or collect the bill from Puccini on Third Avenue and Schneider on Second. The retailer pays one bill for a dozen items—he doesn't have to issue a dozen checks and mail them all over the country.

Those are jobs done either for the manufacturer or for the customer or both. Those are the jobs that are paid for in the spread of price between the manufacturer and the woman. But the retailer complains that he often has to pay for these jobs when he doesn't get them or want them. Here is the case as put by W. G. Morse: ¹

¹ *Printers' Ink*, Feb., 1937.

I believe that a buyer who saves a seller some of the cost of packing is entitled to a discount. Several companies from whom we buy have a different price for cake soap wrapped, or unwrapped, but many manufacturers say we must buy their product wrapped whether we wish it or not, and we pay the price for an unwanted service. . . .

If I want to buy 100 gross of lead pencils and send my check with order, I believe I should be able to get them from the manufacturer and not be forced to pay profits to wholesalers, brokers, retailers, for whose services in this instance I have no need.

Almost everything that has been said here about the grocery trade is also true of drugs except that the condition in the drug business is worse and more confused. The co-operative or voluntary chains have not been successful among druggists. The retail druggist doesn't have to compete so much with chains as the grocer. Something over 85 per cent of the drug business is still done by independents or by chains with two, three or four stores. The local druggist needs more skill than the local grocer. The little pharmacist considers himself a professional man and doesn't want to subordinate himself to anyone else. As in union organizing and all other such movements, the small professional man wraps himself in shoddy garments of fake independence and goes to his doom.¹

The druggist is apt to know his business better than the grocer, but he is being ruined swiftly by the very thing which started him on a certain prosperity, that is, the sale

¹ Talk of ethics on the part of the druggist selling assorted patent medicines is absurd. The patent medicine business is full of murder, bribery, stealing and swindling. It has been and is being thoroughly exposed by the *Journal of American Medicine*, by the magazine *Health & Hygiene*, by a large number of books; also the reports of Consumers Union, Consumers Research, to say nothing of U. S. Government reports.

of other articles than drugs. He had some specialty in the making of prescriptions, but now the chain stores and Macy's are starting prescription counters of a special kind. Unquestionably the drugstore is deteriorating; the ham sandwich is not so good as it was a couple of years ago, and while the Coca-Cola is just as cold, the coffee is not so hot. *Drug Topics* says that in October of 1937 the Foris Drug Company of Philadelphia opened a night club as a department of its store, with a big time show, three bartenders, two chefs, and a six-piece orchestra. The Foris Company says that their sales of "medicinal and drug store products" have risen 500 per cent as a result. Perhaps this is the way out for the drugstores.

9. IS THE CHAIN STORE DECLINING?

IN 1937 the profits of the Great Atlantic & Pacific Tea Company dropped 48 per cent. During that year 1,200 A & P stores closed their doors. It has been rumored that John Hartford, head of the A & P, is going to turn it into a co-operative; others say that he's going to hand it over to his employees.

All this will surprise the shopper who sees a chain store on every block and at every crossroads, the same shopper who is sorry for John Smith, the little old grocer, but who saves her pennies by marketing at A & P.

There are 1,455 different corporate food chains in America, and they sell 33 per cent of all food bought in retail stores. The two largest chains are A & P and Safeway. Of these, A & P in 1937 did a business of \$884,000,000—more than twice as much as Safeway with \$381,868,220. But Safeway sales rose 10.3 per cent, while A & P dropped 2.5 per cent. Some of the Safeway gain can be credited to advertising. That of Safeway Stores has been brilliant, while A & P's has been second-rate and dull. Safeway Stores are also at the moment getting the benefit of a shrewd public relations campaign in California. But these figures of rise and fall in sales are trifling in importance by the side of the drop in profits.

Part of that 48 per cent loss went for taxes; the rest was swallowed by a fierce grocery price war where retailers are cutting each other's throats right and left. Like all price-

cutting wars, this one started in the East, where most A & P stores are located. But such wars always travel steadily toward the West. By the time this book is in print, the war will probably have reached the West Coast. So while West Coast chains like Safeway Stores made a better showing than A & P in 1937, their turn may come later. The problems of A & P aren't peculiar to A & P; they are the problems of all the chain stores.

That part of the 48 per cent which A & P lost in price cutting wouldn't mean any permanent threat. A & P could live through price-cutting wars and win. But it is being attacked on another front which may destroy it—on the legislative front by taxes. And on this front the charge is against all chain stores.

Why should the chain store decline? It seems to have the jump on all other retailers. It buys in volume so that it can make lower prices than the independent dealer. It cuts out jobber and broker, and that saves money. Until recently it could get people inside its stores with "loss leaders"—bargains sold below cost. This practice has now been outlawed in forty-two states. Whether these laws are being enforced or not is a question. There are obviously a good many ways to get around them. All in all, the chain stores—as you and I, the customers—look at them, ought to be booming.

But the chain store has strong and bitter enemies. Some of them rise out of the natural set-up of competition, some come from the ruthless and stupid actions of the chains themselves. They are being battered from four different directions: co-operative buying of independent dealers, super-markets, legislation like the Robinson-Patman Act and Tydings-Miller Act, and taxation.

Of these, the greatest is the tax bills. Villain No. 1 is

another measure proposed by the industrious Congressman Patman which would tax chain stores completely out of existence.

Co-operative buying was explained in the preceding chapter.

The super-markets were for a while a more serious threat. During the depression, manufacturers and jobbers were loaded down with stock which the banks forced them to sell for any price it would bring. Some wholesalers went bankrupt. Groups of shrewd go-getters got together in various places and bought these bankrupt and distress stocks. Such a group would buy an old garage or an abandoned building, stick in the groceries higgledy-piggledy in the crates in which they had come, without arrangement or order, and then sell them off at huge cuts in prices. These adventurers called themselves super-markets.

The location of the super-market was usually far from big trading centers. They needed large floor space on the sidewalk and place for big signs. Lights didn't amount to much and the fixtures were of pine boards. The merchandise was piled any way at all but always marked with the correct price and always within easy reach of the customer. There were no sales checks and no sales clerks, except in one or two departments. Most of these super-markets were self-service stores.

They caught on in a big way and have now settled down into an established business. There is a super-market association. They arrange their stocks a little better. Many of them are now getting together into chains and they still can cut under the prices of the older chains. Some of them have handsome exteriors. These "large markets keep at least one 'policeman' at the door and some even

keep a detective or two drifting around.”¹ At first the payroll was the highest single item of expense. In 1929 they spent 7.55 per cent of sales for payroll expenses, while grocers in nearby cities, for instance, averaged only 6.1 per cent for payroll of employees. But with closer organization payrolls are now less.

In the metropolitan district of New York, Michael J. Cullen started a super-market in 1930. In 1932 he was operating eight markets, each averaging over one million dollars in sales during the year. Sears, Roebuck and Montgomery Ward have such super-markets in practically every city.

The super-markets often rent out various departments to separate retailers. The vegetable man may have nothing to do with the groceries or the meat. The big department store grocery and drug departments are really super-markets but are run with the service of a high-class grocery or drug-store.

The chains trained the woman to save money by going to the store instead of telephoning. That meant the store would not have to be next door to her house. With a good automobile and good roads she was willing to go a few blocks to save a few cents and get a much larger range of choice. Meantime, the chain store saved on rent.

The super-market has done all this, but more so. It has learned a trick or two from the radio, and sometimes lures its customers by entertainment—by Bingo games, cooking schools, and lotteries. It seems almost as though it were on the way to becoming a sort of community center.

The older chains, like A & P and Safeway Stores, are no longer much worried by the super-market. Their answer to

¹ *Advertising & Selling*, April 13, 1933.

this competition (and also, as you will see later, to new taxes) was to adopt the methods of the super-market themselves, to combine groups of their small stores into super-markets. A & P is now operating nearly five hundred. Some of these do more than half a million dollars' worth of business a year, which is ten times as much as the usual A & P store. But they aren't super-markets of the original sort. Some are comparatively small; only a few rent out concessions, though nearly all of them have self-service.

The legislative attack is not so easy for the chains to handle. There have been two kinds of attack: taxation and laws like the Patman Act and the Tydings-Miller Act. Probably no bills that have passed through Congress in the last few years can so affect the cost of your living as these two.

When a manufacturer advertises a product that is to be sold through retailers, an important part of his campaign is to help the retailer become a better merchant. The manufacturer teaches him how to make his store attractive, supplies him with posters and window displays. But the chains wanted more. So when they placed a huge order for goods, they'd say: "If you will deduct \$5,000 from this bill for advertising, we'll spend that much extra in our local newspapers to push your goods." That was a natural and reasonable idea. If the chain had fifty soaps in stock, how nice it would be if it would feature your soap in its advertising.

But it was too easy. Bit by bit it came about that the manufacturer didn't bother to check up on whether the deduction was spent for advertising or not. Sometimes he gave an out-and-out \$5,000 a month advertising allowance to a chain. Or he might give 10 per cent of the profits.

In hearings before Congress, it appeared that A & P used to get over six million dollars a year in discounts from

national advertisers. It came out also that A & P got a twelve-and-one-half per cent discount on Jack Frost sugar. Gristede Bros. bought as much, but couldn't get the discount. It isn't my idea here to pick on A & P, but this is the largest chain. Anything true of the A & P is also true of other large chains—Safeway, Kroger Grocery & Baking Co., American Stores, First National, National Tea, Grand Union, and all the others in varying degrees.

So the advertising allowances became merely another name for cuts in prices. Naturally, the independent dealers were angry, and after a while the manufacturers were frightened. They felt that they were being squeezed. A manufacturer would reach the point where he was selling so much to one chain that it would take most of his output. Then the chain would suddenly turn on him and say, "If you don't give me so-and-so-much for an advertising allowance, I'll stop buying from you." The allowance might be so big that it would cut out all profit. But if he didn't agree, he might lose all of his business and have to close up shop. The manufacturer began to feel that he was a slave of the chain stores. Worst of all, the independent dealers threatened to stop selling his goods. More and more he had to do just what the chains ordered. Out of this grew the Patman bill.

The general principle of the Patman Act is that you cannot offer a discount to anybody unless you are willing to make the discount uniform. You can give any discount you like, you can give your goods away, you can pack it in pink ribbons; but whatever you do, you have to do openly and do for everybody who comes along, provided he buys the same amount of goods. If you give John Jones a pink ribbon or a 10 per cent discount, you've got to give James

Brown the same extras as long as he buys the same amount of goods from you.

But the Act goes further. It says that these allowances have to be fair allowances; they can't be mere excuses. Suppose the manufacturer says, "If you buy in lots of one carload, I can give you a 5 per cent discount on a carload." That doesn't mean, according to the Act, that he can go on and give you 10 per cent for two carloads, or 50 per cent for ten. He has to show there is a difference in his expense between manufacturing, selling, and delivering one carload and ten carloads that equals that extra 45 per cent. This sounds complicated, but it isn't really. The manufacturer can perhaps show that he has a saving of 5 per cent on manufacturing, selling and shipping by carload, but then he can't show that on ten carloads the saving would come to 50 per cent, as he sometimes did before the Act went into effect. The manufacturer, as long as he can prove economy, can pass that saving on, but he can't use mere volume for price discrimination.

At first the law seemed to be working well, but it is after all a law that is pulling against the tide. The current is running with the big groups and against the small individual dealer. According to the advertising trade papers, some of the chain stores put it this way: "We don't care what the Patman Act says. If you want to deal with us, we want our discount. Of course, you can observe the law if you want to, but we just won't buy from you." A few of them have got into trouble with the courts, but some manufacturers have suffered through losing sure big volume outlets.

There seems to be strong evidence from the hearings before the Federal Trade Commission in the cases of Kraft Phenix, Bird & Son, A & P, and Standard Brands, that

about 75 per cent of the manufacturers formerly working under advertising allowance agreements have gone back to such arrangements, mostly in modified form.¹ "Many manufacturers," says *Printers' Ink*, "have the attitude that it is better to take a chance of crossing the Federal Trade Commission than to risk the ill-will of distributors demanding extra money." The only conclusion to be drawn from this confused and discouraging mess is that you can't stop the whirlwind.

All kinds of schemes popped up to get around the bill. "Suppose," said one bright thinker, "suppose the A & P would rig up a place in its stores like those racks for ads they use in streetcars. Then it could sell that space to the manufacturer. Wouldn't that be legitimate? What better display space could you get for the woman than right in a chain store? And the manufacturer could buy this space. Of course it would really be a discount, but who could object?"

Some of the chains publish magazines which are given away or are sold for two or three cents. Advertisers say: "We go into them because we have to. We consider it a hold-up, another way to get a rebate without running into the Patman Act." They ought to be pretty good advertising mediums, since they go to women just when they are shopping for the household. But readers don't think much of magazines given away for nothing or of the advertising which appears in them. Readers do not respond as well as they do to a magazine that they pay for.

But Mr. Patman is by no means defeated. He has a worse wallop for the chains, as you shall see.

¹ *Printer's Ink*, March 25, 1937, "Advertising Allowance Back."

The other law, the Tydings-Miller Act, is one which you are more likely to see in action. It gives a manufacturer the right to fix the minimum retail price on his goods. The idea, of course, is to stop price-cutting, which the manufacturer fears will drive all small dealers out of business and eventually make an anarchy out of entire trades.

Merchants and manufacturers have been fighting about price control from the beginning. Should the manufacturer be able to set the price at which retailers sell his products? Some manufacturers would prefer it. If you are making an ashtray and trying to sell it through all types of outlets, both chain and independent, you want to keep all those channels open so that nobody owns your business except yourself. But suppose a chain store sells your 15-cent ashtray for 13 cents just to bring a lot of people into the store? The independent can't afford that. So the independent gives up selling your ashtray. You lose the independent dealer, and by and by the chain owns your business. As soon as that happens, what does the chain do? They say, "We're the only birds selling your ashtrays. You sell them to us now for 10 cents or go out of business."

The grocery manufacturers don't like price-fixing. They don't even pretend to be for it. Margins are too small; competition is too strong. In drugs you have forty or fifty brands of toothpastes of different flavors. In groceries you get nineteen boxes of cornflakes but they all taste the same, and you don't care to fix a price on any of them.

Suppose there are two brands of shortening: Snow White and Fri-rite. Snow White fixes its price at 15 cents. But Fri-rite can be sold at any price. So the grocer advertises Fri-rite as a bargain at 11 cents. That's fine for Fri-rite, but then Snow White cuts its price too. There's no money for

anybody. So they may cut out both and push a private brand.

But in desperation over trade anarchy, the grocery trade is now pushing a model loss leader bill in the states. It has become a law in Tennessee, and with some changes, in Pennsylvania, Nebraska and Virginia. This bill would establish a floor on retail prices at cost plus six percent. This is a very low mark-up. On the contracts being signed with druggists under the Patman Act, the mark-up is twenty-eight to thirty-three percent. Ohio has no such law. There a few grocery manufacturers, in the presence of well-organized retail grocers, are using a resale price maintenance law to get their cost plus six percent. Soap manufacturers distribute both through grocers and drug stores. The mark-ups and the price fixing situation are so different in the two trades that to avoid confusion, the soap people were the first to sign up. They were followed by Horlick's and Ovaltine, also distributed through both types of store. The first manufacturer to sign, selling altogether through grocers, was Kraft (Cheese). General Foods followed on Maxwell House Coffee, Post Toasties and Jell-O. A few products which have no competition are sitting pretty. But competition on a product soon develops in the grocery trade.

Some drug manufacturers wanted price maintenance from the beginning. Alka-Seltzer is one, because the product is hard to imitate. But not all the manufacturers in the drug industry want it. The proprietary people aren't so sure about it. But there is a lot of shadow-boxing among them on the bill. Their retailers want it badly, so most of the manufacturers pretend to be strong for price-fixing.

Here's how price-cutting worked out for the small drug

retailer. A druggist named Louis Trywusch of New York City wrote to the *New York State Pharmacist*:¹

"The question of baby foods is a very important one. I am delighted to see the Fair Trade Committee take up this matter. . . .

"We handle most of the powder brands. We sell Dextri Maltose at 47¢, but buy it from Macy at retail for from 41¢ to 44¢. If we were compelled to purchase it from our jobber the price would be 51¢.

"We sell Ovaltine at 47¢, buying it from Macy at from 41¢ to 44¢. The jobber's price is 49¢.

"We sell Pablum at 31¢, buying it from Macy at 29¢. The jobber's price is 34¢. . . ."

Before the Tydings-Miller Act, the NRA had helped price-fixing along. Soon it began to be called, not price-fixing, but *fair trade*. Anyway, a company that really wanted to maintain a price on its products could always do it. Ingersoll Watches managed it, by incorporating in every state. It was legal on intra-state but not on inter-state business.

Before the bill was passed, a 50-cent toothbrush was sold in the store for about 39 cents. The words "50 cents" here are really fictional. Neither the manufacturer nor the dealer thinks of it as a 50-cent brush. The real price is 39 cents, though of course it sounds nicer in advertising to call it a 50-cent brush. The druggist would pay about 30 cents for the brush and he could make any price he liked from there up, or from there down if he was willing to use the brush as a loss leader and to lose money on it. Now he has to agree to sell the brush at a minimum price, perhaps 33 cents. Squibb's, for instance, can sign a legal contract with

¹ From *Consumers Union Report*, October, 1937.

any retailer to make the bottom price 33 cents for a tube of dental cream.

But it is so easy to get around this that the law has become something of a farce. Suppose a toothpaste manufacturer puts up a package made up of a tube of toothpaste and a toothbrush. This he sells to the druggist for 59 cents. It is a "50-cent" toothbrush and a "39-cent" tube of cream. If the druggist wishes he can break these packages and sell the toothbrush and the paste separately. If he sells them together, he has got to get at least 59 cents and there will be no price cut. But if he sells them separately and they come to 59 cents altogether, there's a big cut in price. Perhaps by the sheerest accident, these pairs come packed individually in cellophane so that all the dealer has to do is to take off a rubber band and he's got his products separately. Even more simple—what objection can there be if Phillips' Milk of Magnesia offers a glass dish with each tube of paste?

Other such bills were passed in various states. They went up to the Supreme Court which held the "Fair Trade" laws constitutional. Now such laws have been passed by all but six states.

In New York State the price-fixing law (Feld-Crawford) was fought bitterly by Macy's. Both directly and indirectly Macy's is still fighting it with little labels on goods reading: "Price-Fixed Under the Feld-Crawford Law." This makes the customer dislike the legislation very much.

Next, Macy's (and the chains) began at once to push its own brands rather than advertised brands. Macy's is making advertising capital by putting in parallel columns its own product and trademarked product. Macy's can say: "For a well-known brand of ketchup you'll have to pay 25 cents

and for Macy's Lily White 15 cents." In your own mind you substitute the name Heinz or that of some other manufacturer for the words "a well-known brand." In a half page in the New York newspapers, Macy's ad-said: Here are two big cans of toothpowder, one "A well-known brand of toothpowder" for 39 cents. "It is well made, of pure ingredients, by a competent pharmaceutical house. No magic—simply strict skill—is involved in its making." Then the ad quotes the absurd claims of the advertiser that it "tends to strengthen the gums," "the foaming oxygen bubbles penetrate the crevices in and between the teeth." Follows a chemical analysis of the actual contents. Right alongside Macy's shows its own toothpowder, the same size can, the same analysis, makes fun of the advertiser's claims, and winds up by saying the "well-known brand's" fixed retail price is 39 cents, Macy's own toothpowder "NOT price-fixed," but "price-free," is 24 cents. This, by the way, is the first time I've ever known a retailer to make fun of the advertising of a product which he sells.

Their first tentative efforts have turned into a huge consistent advertising campaign. It is probable that these ads proved so profitable that they may give a permanent jolt to the sale of advertised brands in stores like Macy's, whether price-fixing laws work or not. Such advertising is a big gun held at the head of the manufacturer. It may ruin him.

The advertising business believes that all the "Fair Trade" laws will eventually collapse. The power of history is against them, and there are too many ways to get around them.

The chain stores have got used to most of these threats and feel that they can handle them. The one that has got

them dazed and staggering is the string of special chain store taxation bills.

Right now there is a flood of little bills running through the legislatures of the country taxing the chain stores. Whether the chain store is a good thing or a bad thing, and whether the small retailer has a chance to fight it or not, these bills are mostly foolish and badly drawn. They are just a venture on the part of the small retailer. He is frightened. He doesn't realize that the sweep of the chain stores upon him is part of a historical movement, and if he did realize it he wouldn't care. He is fighting for his life. You can hardly expect him to say: "The world is through with me and I'd better just fold up and get out." Besides, he wouldn't know where to get out to.¹

In some states the taxes are deliberately set at a figure to drive the chains out of business altogether. In Louisiana, for instance, chain stores are taxed by outlets, the more outlets, the higher per store tax. It works out as follows:

	Stores	Tax
A & P Stores.....	106	\$58,300
Woolworth	14	7,700
Penney	8	4,400
Melville Shoes	7	3,850
Liggett's	6	3,300
W. T. Grant	5	2,750
S. H. Kress	5	2,750
Montgomery Ward	5	2,750
Sears, Roebuck	4	2,200

The Louisiana Act was upheld by the Supreme Court of Louisiana. In argument before it, chain store lawyers

¹ But it must be remembered that all independents are by no means little helpless "Pop and Mom" stores or little holes in the corner. Some of them are big, powerful, and successful.

pointed out that there were some states where Atlantic & Pacific at that time operated as many as two thousand stores, and in such a state a similar law would mean a million dollars in taxes. Pennsylvania incidentally taxes chains \$500 a store.

Chief pusher of such laws is, of course, the independent retailer. But he is by no means alone. On his side he has some of the big distributors and manufacturers, and he usually has the state legislatures because he is a voter. The chains, often owned outside of the state, are not voters. Even so, such bills would not pass if it were not for a general emotional antagonism toward the chain stores on the part of the public. This the chain stores brought upon themselves. Their indifference to public opinion, their contempt for politicians, were on the level of the attitude of beer people before Prohibition. They have been so arbitrary that they've built up a public opinion against themselves much of which is really unjustified.¹ One charge against them is that since they are not of local origin they do not contribute to charities or take part in social activities. Another charge is that they underpay and overwork their employees. But in its treatment of labor, according to the Department of Agriculture, the independent retailer has no advantage from a social point of view over the chain store. If the independent retailers are "to meet the competition of the chains"

they must buy and sell at approximately the same prices and take substantially the same margins. This some of them are able to do with methods fully as efficient as those of the chain systems. Others manage to stay in business only because the rate of compensation to the labor and capital used in their

¹ In the next chapter this animus is shown in action.

enterprises is below that of their more efficient chain-store competitors.

Prices can be reduced either by

using less labor and capital in work of distribution, as the chains appear to be doing, or by a reduction in the wages to labor and the return on capital utilized in marketing enterprises . . . it is evident that the former [chain store] represents a net social gain where the latter [independent retailer] is only a shifting of advantage between different economic groups.¹

While the chains pay their employees too little, they pay them better than the average independent grocer. *Fortune* (April, 1938) says that A & P has an average for clerks and managers of \$30, as compared to \$22 which is the Department of Labor figure for all retail stores.

Although there are many chains which treat employees badly, on the whole the little grocery store owner works longer, harder, and under worse conditions than the employee of a decent chain store. But this doesn't mean that all owners of little stores ought to shut up shop and get jobs in the chain stores. Many of the little retail stores are owned by elderly people (the "Pop and Mom" stores). They do not make a good living and they work hard; but they could not get a job in a chain store or anywhere else. When such a couple has to close up because of a new chain store, antagonism grows in the neighborhood. This does not keep people from buying at the chains, but it helps legislators to pass bills. An enormous number of women when questioned said that they bought at the chain stores but they would like to tax the chains out of existence so that they

¹ A Report on Chain Store Distribution of Fruits and Vegetables in the Northeastern States.

wouldn't be tempted to buy there.¹ A woman with a budget feels she's got to do the best she can with her husband's money, but her social conscience is uncomfortable.

The chains know that these state bills are only the beginning of their taxation troubles. Worse than all of them is the bill which Senator Patman brought before Congress on February 14, 1938. The valentine handed to the A & P was a possible tax of \$524,000,000 a year. That is nearly 60 per cent of A & P's 1937 sales volume, nearly sixty times the whole of its 1937 net profit.² Not only is each chain store taxed, but the more stores, the higher tax for each store, up to a thousand dollars a store. Beyond that the bill would multiply the total tax by the number of states in which the chain does business. Yet a chain of six department stores which does a business of \$75,000,000 a year would pay a tax of only \$50.

Patman is a shrewd politician, but carried away by fanaticism. He is said to be under the delusion that the independent retailers will make him President of the United States. Orating on the Robinson-Patman bill, he promised that he would abolish chain stores and establish free competition. The independents thought he was something special, and he got 500,000 of them eating out of his hand. He still believes the Patman Act is working. But his 500,000 followers, not being such good believers, have fallen away. He is trying to get them back with his extravagant new tax bill. It has a chance of passing.

Part of that preparation is something called the Freedom of Opportunity Legion. This outfit carries one of the finest and fanciest bags of words you ever heard. Many members

¹ *Fortune*, April, 1938.

² *Op. cit.*

no doubt believe that it is an organization for the furthering of democracy, but it sounds to others as though it were cut to an unpleasantly familiar pattern. The most enthusiastic Nazis in Germany were the small retailers. Part of the promise held out to them was the destruction of department stores and chains. Neither has been destroyed in either Italy or Germany.

In reminiscent language, the Freedom of Opportunity Legion makes similar promises. Some features that are unpleasant are a demand for fifty cents for each \$100,000 of annual sales from retailers, wholesalers, and manufacturers. Any consumer who would like to help along can pay a dollar. For your money you get an identification button with the words "Boost Patman's Community Preservation Bill." The aim of the Opportunity Legion is, in its own words, "to encourage locally owned stores and discourage absentee ownership through chain stores." It plays on local patriotism and a natural human sympathy for the little dealer being pushed to the wall.

Many of the members of the Freedom of Opportunity Legion are well-meaning and kindly people—preachers and teachers who really don't know what it's about. These seem not to know that closing the chain stores would throw 293,800 men and women out of work. And that if they got back into the grocery trade at all, they would probably have to work for smaller wages than they're getting now.

Mr. Patman in his enthusiasm seems to be overlooking the fact that a good many votes are cast by consumers. From the point of view of the independent retailer, Mr. Patman is a great man. From the chain store point of view, he is the Devil incarnate. From the customer's point of view, his activity looks foolish because the customer doesn't

know what Patman's been doing, knows nothing of the various little bills he has put through with the backing of the same group of small retailers . . . all of them bad for the customer.

These are the reasons why for several years the chain store has been declining. Will that decline be permanent? Until the blooming of the chain store tax bills, it looked as though the decline would be temporary. After all, the chains are in the line of historical development. But the taxes have put a different face on the business.

Still, some of the grocers, both wholesale and retail, are wondering whether they've been as clever as they thought about the chain store tax. How are they going to save their own wholesale co-operatives from being taxed? Won't they themselves in some states come under the head of chains? Some of them, too, are lying awake wondering if John Hartford will turn his business over to his employees or into a co-operative.

John Hartford and his brother George have built up the A & P from a little group of tea and coffee stores founded by their father. Of the two, George is supposed to be the practical one and John the idea man. It's common for large business to have a couple of men at the head with a division in jobs.

John Hartford doesn't fit into any ordinary business pattern. He wears flowing black ties like an old-fashioned artist. There is even a story in Greenwich, Connecticut, where he lives, that he has himself driven around in a carriage and pair with a coachman and footman in a sort of 1890 outfit.

He believes that he has done the country a fine service by building up the A & P. He thinks he's done a fine job

and can't see why he should be treated like a public enemy. People call him "quixotic" and "paternal." But the rumors going about have little to do with these romantic adjectives. To turn the A & P into a co-operative and present it to the public would be brilliant. It would be the meanest thing he could do to the independents and at the same time it would order him a statue in history.

Perhaps the story is true, perhaps it is being deliberately circulated. About two years ago, John Hartford told people that if chain store taxes got too bad he would enter the wholesale food field. That story would scare the manufacturers, while the co-operative would scare the independent dealers. Certainly A & P has got to do something. According to *Fortune*, "Mr. John" and "Mr. George" can do one of a number of things.

They can liquidate completely. They can liquidate their retail stores and remain in business as manufacturing wholesalers. They can turn the stores over to their employees in the form of a voluntary chain. They can turn them over to the public as a consumers' co-operative—a gesture that might appeal to the quixotic "Mr. John." Or like the brewer of old they can close their doors and keep one light burning, and wait for another day.

But while they're waiting to decide about that, they're taking one step. For the first time in their history they're doing energetic public relations work. Their man is Carl Byoir, who did a similar job for Machado of Cuba and for the Nazis. Until now A & P public relations work has been either nonexistent or inept. Perhaps they've learned a lesson from the astute job done on the public by the chains of California

10. HOW TO SWING AN ELECTION

THIS is the story of how the Lord & Thomas advertising agency caused the people of the State of California to repeal its chain store tax. It is an object lesson to A & P, but more important, it is an object lesson to all politically minded people and ought to be read carefully, with pencil and paper for notes, by naïve radicals.

The State of California had passed its own chain store tax bill. It was insignificant for a single store under one ownership, but it rose as high as \$500 a store for chain store systems. Behind this bill were 80,000 independent dealers, highly organized. A thousand anti-chain people marched on Sacramento to encourage the governor to sign it. He dared not veto the bill, but he remarked that it could be repealed by referendum if the people of the state wished.

It was at this moment that the Lord & Thomas advertising agency stepped in. This is one of the biggest advertising agencies in the United States, and owned chiefly by Albert D. Lasker, who played a front-page part during the World War as Chairman of the Shipping Board. The agency has shown a lively interest in public affairs at other times. Don Francisco, head of Lord & Thomas in Los Angeles, on a special leave of absence conducted the unpleasant campaign against Upton Sinclair when he ran for governorship of California. Mr. Francisco's work there was rather more satisfactory to advertisers than it was to socially minded citizens of California. It was so satisfactory indeed

that he has just been made president of the company and moved up to New York.

Francisco now took charge of the chain store tax repeal job for Lord & Thomas. It was an astute piece of work. With him was associated Braun & Company, public relations counselors of Los Angeles.

First, Lord & Thomas raced around and got the signatures of 135,000 California voters calling for a referendum. Then they put this carefully aside and got busy with a little good ground work. For seven months, if you had been in California, you wouldn't have known that anything was happening. As Lord & Thomas explained to their clients, "It is not enough to be right; it is also necessary to seem right." During those seven months, Lord & Thomas were carefully arranging so that their clients should "seem right."

Nearly all the information I give here I got from a report sent out by Lord & Thomas to prospective advertisers. This report was a sort of boast. You can be quite sure that the advertisers who got it thought that Lord & Thomas was a pretty shrewd crowd. And if the agency hasn't got new business out of this report, I shall be very much surprised.

In it, Lord & Thomas pointed out that the chain stores had as their natural allies three groups of people:

- (1) *Their employees.* There are 40,000 of these in California. But many of them were opposed to the chain stores because their pay was small, their hours long, and their treatment bad.
- (2) *The producers and processors* (processors are middlemen of goods handled by the chain stores). Many of these were opposed because they, too, felt that they had suffered from many an abuse which had forced down their profits and sometimes driven them into bankruptcy. One example, a chain would buy so much

goods from one processor that he would turn his whole plant over to them. Then when he was depending on the one outlet, the chain would fix low prices, which he was forced to accept.

- (3) Customers. These appreciated the low prices, but many of them knew and sympathized with the troubles of the employees and the producers.

Lord & Thomas went systematically to work on all three groups.

Gravely they tell what they did about the employee group. First, they said to the chain stores: "You've got to stop using numbers for your employees. You've got to call them by name. The clerks had been numbers until the owners wanted their votes. So clerks "doffed their anonymity and put on neat badges giving names and titles." These same clerks, now no longer anonymous, were each then put on card catalogs with all kinds of personal data. Here and there a salary was raised, and here and there hours were cut. There was a sudden outburst of parties, picnics, glee clubs, orchestras, athletic games, and dances "with the blessing and co-operation of the management." When a worker had a baby or a wedding anniversary, he got a pleasant letter from the boss. For an accident or illness or death in the family, there was a letter of regret and sometimes even a little "practical help."

Lord & Thomas say that the workers responded by a new interest in their employers' problems, including the tax. Among the festive preparations was a movie called "The Spirit of '36." (How tired those three little blue-clad ragged soldiers of 1776 must be by now. They have marched so much.) You can imagine what that was like.

Endowed with a name instead of a number, the happy

recipient of a form letter of sympathy, and member of a glee club, the employee came around to the boss's side. He then was trained to tell his friends and relatives the whole story so that they would line up for the referendum, or, as the report says, "the employee had facts and technique for presenting the problem to outsiders."

At the same time, Lord & Thomas was working with the second of the natural groups of friends who were so unnatural as not to be friendly. In 1934 the grocery chains bought \$229,000,000 worth of goods in California, the agency discovered. Each chain made a list of the sellers of these goods. Many were farmers, and some of these had also sold their products to the same chains outside the state.

California is a state of small towns. Less than half its people live in cities of more than 50,000. The Californian thinks nothing of driving thirty or forty miles to a meeting. He belongs to Rotary, and Kiwanis, and Lions, and Elks, and he often belongs to excellent marketing organizations.

To the farmers Lord & Thomas sent men to make speeches. Before they set out they had to stop shaving for three or four days. Nor were they allowed to press their suits. This job with farmers, by the way, was so successful that it spread all over the United States.¹

Another Lord & Thomas scheme that has been copied around the country is the chain store drive on local farm products. As you probably know, California grows nearly all of the peaches canned in the country, so in California the chains put special energy behind canned peaches. They ran sales of dried fruits and other local farm products. The

¹ These men were sent out by Agricultural Trade Relations, Incorporated, supposedly formed by Lord & Thomas.

drives were intended to show the farmer that the chains were stabilizing his market.

For the first time Lord & Thomas brought together the heads of the chains and the heads of marketing organizations and other groups to which most of the farmers belong. Through these conferences, the chain stores gave up a number of abuses, such as unreasonable quantity discounts, "loss leaders" on agricultural products, and unearned advertising allowances.¹ The "loss leader" sale means that a store pushes one item at a reduced price in order to bring people into the place, and in the long run, the manufacturer or grower of the "loss leader" is the victim. On the whole, the farmers were pleased with what they gained in these get-togethers.

Next, Lord & Thomas went to work on the charge of indifference in local community welfare work. They proceeded to teach the local managers "the importance of civic affairs and community movements" and "more frequently than ever," says the report, chain store managers went to meetings of Chambers of Commerce, clubs, and other groups. They joined the Rotary and the Elks. Managers were allowed to give donations of money and merchandise on their own authority. And here's a mild phrase which is peculiarly interesting in the light it throws on the whole history of chain store business. In dealing with landlords, bankers, real estate and insurance agents, the chains became *more polite*.

A large staff of speakers was busy day and night with the farm groups, businessmen's clubs and women's clubs. Any gathering could have a speaker for nothing. Sometimes by

¹ While illegal in interstate commerce, such allowances are still legal in many states.

seven o'clock in the morning the speaker had already addressed three meetings. One of them began with a colored janitors' meeting at 4 A.M.

This ran on for seven months. Then suddenly newspaper advertising and a radio program burst upon the state. Each Monday evening on the radio came the California Hour. Politics was not mentioned. There was music and in each program a salute to some locality in California; also each program included a professional or amateur performance from that locality. In sixty minutes there were only three or four commercial announcements, and those brief.

There were prizes for essays on the chain store situation. All of this was deftly done. The benefits of the chains were pointed out, but there was not much fuss about the tax. I suppose one would call this campaign "educational."

The primaries were held in August. Between the primaries and the elections two months elapsed, and during those two months the chains "took off their gloves." The newspapers were deluged with material. Important people in chains had personal talks with newspaper publishers. The speakers' bureau began to talk about the tax itself.

Some of the advertising was slick. There's a chain in California which sells "See's Homemade Candies." These are supposedly made or owned or devised or something by Grandma See. But these antitax advertisements showed a picture of a lovely old lady called Grandma See, kind-faced, white-haired, and eighty-two years old, looking friendly and saying, "Do you want to put me out of business?"

Through all this advertising ran a magnificent slogan. "22 is a tax on you. Vote NO." You see how catchy and simple a command, with rhythm, with plenty of o's. Titles

of books, advertising headlines, and slogans should contain a lot of o's. As you see, the chains were not relying purely on pity and sympathy for Grandma See, old and sweet though she might be, but were building on the surer basis of money-saving for the customer. The organization as a whole didn't appear in most of these ads. They were signed by the separate chains.

Then Lord & Thomas got an accidental break. The supporters of the bill, the little stores, got some money together, and it turned out that the man at the head of the money-raising outfit kept 40 per cent of all he collected. Lord & Thomas took care to expose him.

Besides, the actions of the small retailers were neither lily-white nor naïve. They organized and publicized fake co-operatives and pulled other such tricks. And they had some acute ways of fighting: They got a list of Lord & Thomas accounts. Then they put all the products advertised by Lord & Thomas under the counter. The Orange Growers Cooperative is a Lord & Thomas client. The independents hid their oranges and pushed those of growers outside the combine.¹

But the pro-tax people were bewildered and at a loss. According to Lord & Thomas themselves, the head of the pro-tax association said: "I wish the chains would come out in the open and fight. I'm afraid of this velvet touch."

Though this is not stated in the Lord & Thomas report, the manufacturers handed out money to both sides. They dared not take a stand.

During the last few weeks, everything was speeded up.

¹ A man who used to work for the chain store public relations outfit turned against them and started to work for the small retailer. He had planted a girl in the chain store group and in a little give-away sheet began to publish private letters from their files. Pretty ugly stuff it was, too.

Extra radio talks came over the air, double cards appeared in streetcars and buses, outdoor posters, theatre slides, lapel buttons, windshield stickers, bumper strips, flooded the state. Other organizations turned out to help. Indignant protests against the bill came from the Commonwealth Club of California, the State Chamber of Commerce, the U. S. Chamber of Commerce, the "California Consumers Conference," and so on.

Mass meetings two hours long were held in auditoriums. These were really shows. Most of the time was taken up with entertainment by professional talent. Good prizes, like radios and waffle-irons, were given away at the door. The show was entirely free. The clerks at the local chain stores gave out the tickets. "The Spirit of '36" marched again. Sometimes there were light refreshments or dancing. Fifty such shows were held in the Los Angeles area alone before election, and an average of more than 1,500 persons attended each one.

Lord & Thomas seem especially proud of the last meeting of the campaign. This was on November 2, the night before election, in the Central Avenue (colored) section of Los Angeles. It was called "East Side Mardi Gras," and had an all-colored program. Master of Ceremonies, Speakers, projection operators, audience—all were colored. 1,800 came. In the same district, on the same night, two rival candidates for the office of district attorney of Los Angeles County spoke. Each attracted about 150 people, although this was a bitter fight.

Then came election day, but Lord & Thomas didn't sit back and wait. The chain store employees made lists of their relatives and friends and set to work on them. Many of the relatives and friends acted as volunteers. There was

an intensive registration drive. Big scale maps full of pins showed where the employees lived. They were organized on a military basis: one worker to each district (precinct it is called in the report); one lieutenant for each twenty precincts; a captain for each ten lieutenants; a major for each five captains. On election day the employees were told to see every voter opposed to the tax and make sure he voted, take him to the polls if necessary. In Los Angeles County over 5,000 employees gave part of their day to this, and 60 per cent of all chain store employees did some actual work on it.

Polls had been taken as the campaign went along. In August, only 39 per cent were opposed to the bill, in September that had risen to 54. On election day the bill was voted down by 64 per cent of the voters.

After it was over, Lord & Thomas interviewed the voters and got some interesting notes on why they voted as they did. The most effective argument with those who voted for the repeal of the bill had been that it raised the cost of living. On the other side, the best argument had been that the chains were monopolies. More women than men had been moved by the argument about the rise in the cost of living, and more rural voters than urban voters. More men than women objected to monopoly in business, and more urban than rural voters.

That is how Lord & Thomas went to the people of California, only the people of California didn't know anything about Lord & Thomas, and don't now.

The bill had been defeated but there was plenty more to be done and the chain stores decided to go on with the

work. Lord & Thomas had had enough. They didn't like some of the repercussions. But Braun & Company is still on the job and is working cleverly for the chain stores, not only in California, but in a number of other states. As a result of the success of the California effort, the chains all over the country are beginning to get into public relations work. As shown in the preceding chapter, A & P was one of the last to join. So far, much of their effort has been wasted, because it hasn't been co-ordinated. But they're learning.

As a result, all kinds of organizations are popping up around the country. The word "consumer" and the word "foundation" are pets among them.

The Southwide Association of Consumers, with headquarters in Dallas, Texas, for a while worked to remove the tax on products made from cottonseed and other Southern vegetable oils. Leading clubwomen worked on it gratis. But apparently many of these women disliked various aspects of the work and resigned. The secretary-publicist and field representative were paid workers. It is said that the financial backers, discouraged by resignations and apathy of the public, stopped sending in financial help, and the headquarters closed. Oddly, the Dallas local unit of the Southwide Association of Consumers has now forgotten all about cottonseed oil, and is seeking apparently to defeat the proposed chain store tax of Texas.

Suddenly also there has been a growth among marketing co-operatives. In the East two potato marketing co-operatives have been organized. As apparent sponsors in their boards appear farmers and agricultural college people. But I am told that the funds were put up by chain stores. That

came out when some of the farmers asked for a financial report.

The chains are learning how to influence public opinion, but they may be learning too late. They may be learning just in time to make way for co-operatives.

11. SELLING FOOD AS MEDICINE

FOR thirty years the fight has been going on to keep patent medicines out of decent publications. In the early 1900's Harvey W. Wiley led a battle against them. Samuel Hopkins Adams carried forward the work in a magnificent series of articles prepared for and published in *Collier's*. Many advertising agencies wouldn't take a patent medicine account. High-class magazines and newspapers turned down disreputable patent medicine advertising. The radio chains refused low-grade patent medicine accounts. As far as the better media were concerned, the fight was won.

But you can't stop either the ingenuity of advertising people or the passion of the average person for a rabbit's foot in a pill. The cure-all is back in the most respectable places, and in such a curious form that most readers do not recognize it. The patent medicine is sitting in the cheaper seats, its fine front plush pew taken up by perfectly good, respectable foods. These are advertised, not as something good to eat, but as medicine. The New York State Milk Control Committee did it with milk. The pineapple growers did it with pineapple, the citrus fruit growers do it with orange juice. No longer is breakfast food shot out of guns (as in the Puffed Rice ads of an earlier day), nor is it greeted with a smile by a healthy boy. No. Now the breakfast food advertisers help themselves freely from the vitamin alphabet soup. The most egregious of all, perhaps because most blatant, is the campaign on Fleischmann's Yeast, owned by

Standard Brands. The original campaign, which ran for several years, was not quite successful. The present one, "Life Begins at 40," is both more able and more dangerous. *Health and Hygiene* calls this advertising "one of the laughs of the month," but it isn't really awfully funny.

Fleischmann's does not entirely control the yeast market. Anheuser-Busch has about a fifth of the sale. During Prohibition a considerable amount of yeast was used in the manufacture of illicit beer. When women baked bread at home, and when small dealers did their own baking, Fleischmann's had a huge business in selling fresh yeast, but that too has diminished. The big baker is apt to use an inferior brand of yeast or some chemical substitute. The yeast business was having trouble.

Then Fleischmann's consulted Donovan & Armstrong, a Philadelphia agency. Mr. Donovan knew a man with boils whose doctor had ordered him to take brewers' yeast. Mr. Donovan was haunted by the thought that compressed yeast might do even better. He talked the idea over with the Fleischmann Company, had special investigations made by doctors, and finally evolved the clever idea: If people don't bake bread, make them take yeast without the bread. Yeast for health! Sales jumped. But for some reason the account was changed to the J. Walter Thompson Company, and yeast was advertised as a digestive ferment. In short, it became completely a patent medicine.

Pure yeast, such as brewers use, is rich in vitamins. It contains four different kinds, D, B, G, E. Artificial yeast, sold for baking bread and cakes, is much poorer in vitamins, contains no D, little E, and less B than the brewers' yeast. For many conditions yeast is helpful. It contains microbes

which produce bacteria that stop the growth of harmful organisms in the intestinal tract. Because of its vitamins, especially B, it has a good effect on lax gastrointestinal muscles, and it is often helpful in chronic anemia and fatigue.

But it is dangerous to offer it as a general medicine. Yeast, for instance, is a mild laxative. It should be used only in cases where the elimination is slow. Where there is a rapid intestinal rate yeast may provoke spasms. It is dangerous in cases of gastric ulcer or gastritis with hyperacidity, or for spastic constipation. In all such conditions it makes the illness worse. More, yeast cakes contain corn and tapioca, to which some people have an allergy. People suffering from gas may aggravate the condition by its use, and should have tests before taking it.

Yeast was advertised also as a cure for pimples and acne. Dr. H. H. Hazen, one of the leading skin specialists in the country, says, in *Health & Hygiene* (Sept. 1936), that it is of no value in the treatment of either one, but actually sometimes produces pimples. In susceptible people yeast sometimes causes asthma and eczema.

So yeast is a dangerous remedy to offer for general use. Yet from its advertising you might think it would cure anything from bunions to falling hair. Once more respectable newspapers and magazines run patent medicine advertising, only now they call it food.

At first this advertising sold a lot of yeast, but every sixty days there had to be a whole new flock of patients. People got tired of eating yeast—or got tired of waiting for results—or got indigestion. The campaign as a whole was a failure. The sale of Fleischmann's Yeast continued its decline,

while that of Anheuser-Busch, which had done no advertising, had been rising.¹

The late Senator Copeland of New York was one of the stars on the Fleischmann's Yeast radio hour, and he, too, went down to defeat in 1937 in a foolish campaign for nomination as Mayor of New York. There is probably no connection between the two failures, but it's encouraging to think about them together.

But Fleischmann's, or perhaps we should say Standard Brands, which owns Fleischmann's Yeast, still had faith in the medical idea. The earlier advertising was addressed to adolescents. They were to get rid of pimples by eating yeast. The youngsters, though, weren't to rely entirely on yeast. They got free an Arthur Murray dance book so they could learn all the new steps. These bright young people probably learned the new steps and forgot to eat the yeast. In the 1938 campaign Standard Brands abandoned the young and appealed to the middle-aged, grabbing at people at the time when they were beginning to feel tired. "Life Begins at 40" is a brilliant slogan for a patent medicine.

But people over 40 are especially the ones who cannot handle a general stimulant like yeast. The ads did not say that you would become a great painter or a great writer or a leading clubwoman or a big businessman if you took yeast after 40, but when you had finished reading them that idea had slipped into your mind. There were certain modifications which sounded as though the Federal Trade Commission had been looking at the copy. This is a sample.

By stimulating the gastric flow, quickening and strengthening it, it is often possible to check digestive decline. This is the special help Fleischmann's Yeast gives you. . . .

¹ Tide, July 15, 1937.

This may be correct enough, but as a general digestive remedy yeast remained as doubtful as it was before. Vitamins played a big part in the new campaign. "Nerve vitamin," "cold-resistance vitamin," "bone vitamin," and "vitality vitamin,"—you could get all of them from three cakes a day of Fleischmann's Yeast.

Whether the people over forty responded better than the ones under forty is not yet known. The public doesn't object to the patent medicine idea in the yeast campaign. It just doesn't like to eat yeast.

Citrus fruit semi-medical advertising has been a huge success. Perhaps you have always thought that it was you who decided to drink orange juice for breakfast instead of eating a whole orange. It was not you but the citrus fruit growers and Lord & Thomas, advertising agents. The orange industry, with almost dazzling brilliance, taught the American people to drink oranges instead of eating them. People already had the habit of eating oranges. While you might once have peeled one orange, you now drink the juice of three. You like it; you enjoy it; it gives you a pleasant feeling. Perhaps it helps you, and perhaps it neither helps nor hurts you. All this is fair enough. It's good for the business of the orange growers. But they claim too much. While the ads don't exactly lie, they do not tell all the truth.

Oranges aren't good for all people, though they are good for a greater number of them than yeast. People who suffer from stomach fermentation, in whom food produces gas, shouldn't eat oranges. For some others who can get away with a few oranges, many oranges are bad. But the advertising doesn't bother to explain any of this.

Everything said here about oranges is true, of course, also of grapefruit. The country is getting in the habit of

drinking grapefruit juice instead of eating grapefruit, and that, too, is no accident. Florida grapefruit is sweeter than that of California; the few that are grown in Arizona are the sweetest. But any grapefruit juice is apt to be worse than oranges as a producer of stomach gas. And sometimes the advertising is downright dishonest. The streetcar cards at the moment urging you to eat grapefruit because it is alkaline and will "prevent infections" are optimistic, to say the least of them. This alkaline business is a special kind of nonsense. White Rock mineral water orders you to keep on the alkaline side by drinking a lot of White Rock. What does "alkaline side" mean? Is White Rock good for body acidity or stomachic acidity? Or for thirst?

It would have been impossible to make this huge success of drinking oranges if the public hadn't liked the taste of orange juice. That, added to the advertising, has sent the use of oranges up fourteen times while prunes have merely doubled in twenty years. Prunes have as much food value as oranges, and they are much cheaper. But the growers haven't done much about advertising them, either as food or as medicine. Even if they had, I doubt if they would be as popular as oranges, because most people think they don't taste as good.

Apples, too, have joined the parade. They used to be merely good to eat, but now, according to the Washington State Apple Growers Association:

"Who's afraid of cold germs, pooh!
One juicy apple will see you through."

Pretty silly was another child of the J. Walter Thompson Company. This was the advertising of cheese as a medicine instead of as a food. Velveeta, the cheese advertised, was

a processed cheese. Natural cheese is allowed to mature slowly. It takes a long time to make a good cheese by natural methods. But that's too slow for many manufacturers. It is quicker to make processed cheese. Processed cheese, instead of being allowed to ripen by the action of enzymes, is cooked mechanically to a point where the vitamins are destroyed. The natural enzyme is killed and the enzyme is needed for flavoring and fermenting. Processed cheese can never get soft, and when you chew it, it is apt to become gummy. No soft cheese can be processed. People who know food are careful to buy only the soft cheeses or imported hard cheeses.

Miss Lamb, Chief Educational Officer of the U. S. Food and Drug Administration, has pointed out that processed cheese has been a "godsend to the industry, for it provides a means of using up second-quality or otherwise unsaleable cheeses." Old cheeses are ground up, sometimes without too much care to see that all mold is removed, and the cheese is heated with water, salt, and an emulsifying agent. The ones most commonly used, according to Miss Lamb, are sodium phosphate, sodium citrate, or Rochelle salts.¹

The dealer likes processed cheese because it can't spoil, while real cheese can spoil. Apparently the American consumer doesn't know the difference. If a cheese is processed, it has to be plainly marked on the package, so that you need not take any chances. Most Kraft cheeses are processed. When they are, they are so marked on the package.

Natural cheese, or, if you wish, real cheese, is a cheap and good food if you can digest it. Processed cheese is a poor food. Instead of apologizing for the processing of

¹ 40,000,000 Guinea Pig Children, by Rachel Lynn Palmer & Isadore M. Alpher.

Kraft's Velveeta, the ads turned it to advantage. Turning a drawback into an ad-argument is sort of copy writers' triumph. "Processed cheese for the good of your teeth," sang the headlines. There was a lot of talk about the balanced calcium, phosphorus and vitamin A, how Velveeta promoted growth, built resistance to lung infection, and, most scientific touch of all, that its nutritional rate was + + + (sic). That looked wonderful in the illustrations, whatever it may mean. Oddly, the American Medical Association was used to back up this advertising.

This campaign was a failure, and it is obvious at once why it would have been. No man, no matter how easily duped, could eat enough cheese to make himself believe that it was curing his colds. People either eat cheese because it tastes good or they're not going to eat it at all. That any advertiser should think that he could make people eat large gobs of cheese as medicine shows how desperate the "idea man" may become.

Most of us remember the ads that demanded if we had had "our iron today." We were supposed to get it by eating raisins. Raisins do contain iron, and raisins taste good. But to eat enough raisins to get enough iron would lay you low with indigestion. Raisins are so hard to digest that doctors use them in test meals. They put a few raisins into the test meal to try the stomach on its hardest possible job. The raisin campaign, too, faded out. But it was profitable for the raisin growers. The raisins were packed in small packages which were sold for five cents. Stanley Grady, the sales manager who planned this packaging, claimed that as a result of the packaging and of the iron campaign he got rid of hundreds of salesmen.

There is a plague of ads of foods to make you thin.

"Don't be fat. Drink Welch's Grape Juice." That is tested and approved by Good Housekeeping Bureau, whatever that means. Grape juice contains a large amount of sugar. A glass of it has as much fattening content as a cup of coffee with sugar or cream or as a slice of bread and butter.

The J. Walter Thompson Company was responsible for what seems to me another absurd food campaign. Canned pineapple is a popular food. People like to eat it. It tastes good. But the business struck some bad spots for a number of reasons and so it abandoned its excellent advertising of pineapple as something good to eat and through the J. Walter Thompson Company began to advertise pineapple as a medicine. One wonders who in this agency has such a dislike for food that they pass right over its taste and advertise some fanciful medicinal value. Sounds as if there might be some indigestion around there.

Anyway, this advertising campaign set out to make people eat two slices of canned pineapple a day for the sake of health. How are you going to stop such ads? How can any government board regulate such a campaign? If an advertiser wants to say it's good for your health to eat two slices of canned pineapple a day, how are you going to prove that it may not be so?

Since only about one person in five is likely to be interested in medicine, and all of us are interested in food, this campaign didn't go too well. It didn't sell as much pineapple for the amount spent as the simple, more direct approach on pineapple as a food. It was meant to increase the sale of pineapple as the "Drink Orange Juice" campaign increased the sale of oranges, and that it failed to do. Anyway the advertiser took his account away from the J. Walter Thompson Company.

One of the funniest of these food-as-medicine-ads was done by Borden. This was "Drink More Milk to Keep Your Hair." This is merely part of the general frenzy which has attacked the placid glass of milk.

Milk is no perfect food. Many people cannot digest it. Sometimes it lacks iodine and sometimes it lacks certain vitamins. But it is a food and not a medicine. Dr. Morris Fishbein in the *Journal of American Medicine* says that advertising is making milk ridiculous by emphasizing the value of milk as a cure for various complaints.

The present fashion for irradiation in food has also hit milk. Nobody is going to become ill from that, so it will probably run along for quite a while. It merely is the purest nonsense.

Take irradiated milk. Irradiation in milk transforms the ergosterol in milk into vitamin D. Since you don't know how much ergosterol there was in the milk, and since there was very little anyway, you can see how much good in a medicinal way irradiated milk would be, especially as vitamin D is now made in tablet form and you can easily take exactly the quantities that you ought to have. There is a milk into which vitamin D is added in oil form, and there, too, you know exactly what you are getting.

Sometimes vitamin D is advertised without the benefit of irradiation. There were "hot dogs" with vitamin D in the Middle West a couple of years ago, and in Chicago the Orbit Gum Company got vitamin D into chewing gum.¹ And the most farcical, "Woodbury's Cold Cream contains vitamin D which stimulates youthful beauty of the skin."

Quaker Oats had the nerve to claim that it was the "only protective food rich in vitamin B that combats nervousness

¹ Tide, June, 1934.

and constipation." I hope you didn't depend on Quaker Oats for your vitamin B because the Federal Trade Commission has made them stop such talk.

I must say that irradiated milk and irradiated bread sound simply magnificent. You can see the pink coming into your cheeks and the vigor coming into your arms and legs with the very words. But it probably won't last. The foods haven't the pep of the old-fashioned patent medicines, perhaps because the manufacturers don't add alcohol to them.

Jennie I. Rowntree, Professor of Nutrition at the University of Wisconsin, in the *Journal of Home Economics*, puts one pertinent question for you on such advertising: "Is the advertiser attempting to practice medicine without a license?"¹

The situation looks bad for those who are trying to sell food as a patent medicine. And the end isn't coming from the government or from advertisers, but from the customer. Women seem no longer interested by the vitamin and nutritional talk, and many sensible advertising people think they never were.

Food is something to eat. Campbell's tomato juice "Taste the Difference" campaign was a huge success. What you want to know is whether it tastes good. If you have something the matter with you, then you begin to think about food in another way. Even then what you want to know is whether a food is nutritious and digestible.

¹ *Advertising & Selling*, Dec. 6, 1934.

12. WHEN YOU ORDER YOUR DINNER

WHAT in the name of anything you like can be a sound economic reason for advertising flour and meat? People have to eat bread and have to eat meat. Sometimes advertisers try to get us to eat more bread or more meat. Such ideas are socially unsound. People can eat only a certain amount, and if they eat more of one thing they will probably eat less of another.

But from the point of view of the advertiser the campaign on Gold Medal flour has indeed taken a gold medal. In 1936 General Mills was milling seven times as much as in 1907. In 1907 they spent on Gold Medal and allied products \$500,000; in 1917, \$1,000,000; in 1934, \$2,124,000.

Of course, there's a reason why women are buying so much more Gold Medal flour. When a woman sets out in her kitchen to bake a pie or bread or a cake, she is putting in a lot of work and spending a good deal for materials. She doesn't want all that wasted because the flour isn't quite right. She is willing to pay a little more for Gold Medal, with the idea that it is worth her while for the quality, and she will pay even more for Softasilk or Swansdown when she's baking a cake.

Gold Medal is an excellent flour, but A & P's Sunnyfield Family flour is also good and costs less. Since the woman doesn't know much about Sunnyfield Family flour, she naturally buys Gold Medal, of which she does know and of which she is sure.

At first Gold Medal advertised with a foolish slogan: "Eventually, Why Not Now?" This ran for years. It meant nothing; hardly anyone remembered what product it advertised. But the Gold Medal people knew whose it was and so thought the pointless words meant something. Then they added the comment, "Eat More Wheat." To listen to them today, you would think that the fact that they sold more wheat meant that everybody sold more wheat. This effort to make people eat more wheat was not put out by Gold Medal alone but by all wheat and flour people. It was a failure.

Less flour is used today than twenty-five years ago. That is because there is greater variety of food to be had. Besides, during the war "Save Wheat" and "Save Sugar" handed these two products a change-of-habit jolt. People aren't going to abandon the new vegetables and new fruits for the old bread and butter. The tendency is toward food with more cellulose content, more vegetables and fruit.¹ No doubt our warm houses have something to do with this, since, of course, both sugar and wheat are heat-producing. It is impossible to change people back except in an emergency where they can't help themselves.

The slim idea for women sent sugar and wheat down even further, and the flour people made some desperate efforts to stop the deluge. General Mills had a silly campaign to encourage bread eating "to smash the Hollywood Libel . . . that bread does not make for slender figures. You should hear the Hollywood stars rave about bread!" *Partners in Plunder*² has some extracts from this advertising:

¹ But not me. I'd rather eat bread and butter any day.

² By J. B. Matthews and R. E. Shallcross.

Mary Astor: I always eat some bread at every meal.

C. Colbert: I love bread—always eat it in some form, three times a day.

But this nonsense could hardly go on. General Mills had a wiser scheme when they “transformed ordinary flour into three specialty products—Bisquick, Wheaties and Softasilk, gave advertising a chance to prove its power, and realized \$50 per barrel instead of \$7.00.”¹ Bisquick is prepared flour, Softasilk is a good quality of cake flour with a clever name, and Wheaties is a cereal. A by-product is Cream of Wheat. Cream of Wheat is the leavings, the little granules that drop off in the milling of wheat. But it’s a good quality. It advertises in the magazines only, and is a success. For this the company can use the leavings from its mills, put it in packages, and that’s all. In making shredded wheat, cornflakes and even oatmeal, some machinery is necessary, but for Cream of Wheat there’s nothing but the selection of the packaging. You could buy the product yourself in bulk cheaper, but you wouldn’t want to. You might get wormy stuff, and you would have to do a lot of shopping. The saving might not make up for the time consumed.

A brand like Gold Medal or Pillsbury’s must be sold to women for use in their own kitchens and, as I have said, there is much less bread baked at home than there used to be. In *Middletown* the Lynds found that more than two-thirds of working-class wives and nearly all of the business-class wives spend no time today baking bread or rolls. “According to the head of the leading Middletown bakery, not over 25 per cent of the bread eaten in the city was commercially baked in 1890, while today 55 to 70 per cent of

¹ *Advertising & Selling*, May 24, 1934.

the total annual consumption, varying with the season, is baked by commercial bakers."

The flour advertising has done no harm except to your pocketbook. But the bread advertising has been vicious. It has ruined the bread of this country. It has done so, of course, as the employee of the big bakers. Most factory bread is tasteless, and the consumer gets little for his money.

The Department of Agriculture has prepared a formula for a typical good pound loaf bread:

	Ounces
Flour	10.06
Yeast .....	.25
Sugar .....	.35
Salt .....	.18
Malt .....	.10
Shortening (lard) .....	.30
Milk .....	.50

The energy of the wholesale baking industry seems not to go into baking such a good loaf, but into cutting down the flour and the yeast, and wherever possible in substituting chemicals, water and machinery for real food. Often the bread is allowed to rise too long. The loaf looks bigger because of all the air in it, but it weighs less. Added to this, butter fats have almost disappeared from bread and poorer grades of flour are used.

Excellent Vienna and French bread is made with all water instead of milk. Commercial breads commonly mix half water with their milk. This baker's milk is usually powdered skim milk, which is cheaper and easier to use, though it misses out on vitamin A and fat. Of course, you practi-

cally never get butter as shortening—usually lard or cottonseed oil.

The *Baker's Weekly*, a trade paper, says that for one hundred pounds of bread, the manufacturer allows 43 per cent for cost of ingredients and 26.9 per cent for selling (including advertising) and delivery. Shop labor accounted for only 10 per cent. That's the manufacturer's cost. On the retail selling price, of course, the share of ingredients is smaller. The Department of Agriculture says that on your 12-cent loaf of bread a little more than 4 cents goes for materials. In 1936, roughly 7.2 slices represented the share of ingredients in your loaf.

This imitation bread is popular with the consumer, the storekeeper,¹ and the manufacturer, because, having little flour and much chemicals, it keeps fresh longer than good bread. It accounts for the popularity of the electric toaster. But, says the advertising man, "the consumer likes it. He doesn't know good bread, otherwise he wouldn't buy this sawdust packed in cellophane." It's true. The consumer likes the soft mushiness.²

On the butter for your bread you come out better. Here advertising—and standardization—have improved both the quality and the cleanliness of the product. No doubt in the old days the big wooden tub full of yellow freshness looked mighty appetizing. But in truth you had no idea what was in it. Butter could be made in any dirty farmhouse and could have any sort of quality. Now the tendency toward bigger industries in butter makes inspection easy. And you

¹ Good bread business is the basis of good grocery business because bread is a staple item. (*Chain Store Age*.) People come in to buy staples, and then buy this and that. Not "good bread," you notice, but "good bread business."

² And it does make better bread pudding.

can be sure you're getting the government standard in butter fat.

Perhaps you are hard up and buy what some grocers call "Scotch butter," or less prettily, margarine. Probably though you don't use that if you live in the city, except maybe for cooking. The biggest sale of margarine is in the Middle West among farmers, who actually have to sell their own dairy products and buy margarine at the village A & P.¹

Even more senseless than the advertising of flour is the advertising of ham. Ham advertising, according to the wise-cracking copy writer, has been "ham" advertising.² It has been stupid and silly even from its own point of view. The ham people can't get a wide distribution (too much local production) and the advertising has been childish. Also, it has been done in fits and starts. No product to be eaten every day can be advertised that way.

Because of the work of our big packers and the wide expanse of country, the American public has grown into the habit of eating storage meats. There are certain meats, like beef, which are, no doubt, better for a certain amount of storage, but lamb is poor when it is stored, and veal is ruined. Stored veal is not fit to eat. It's flavorless, indigestible, and sometimes even dangerous. In Europe, where they cannot afford to feed cattle, lambs and calves are killed young and there's always a supply of fresh veal and lamb. That's why there's so much good veal in Italy and France, for instance.

In sections where there is a good deal of rain, dairy cattle are bred, and in such places dairy products are largely eaten, as in Wisconsin and in Holland. There calves are not killed

¹ Tide, Feb. 1, 1937.

² An exception to this is Hormel Ham.

for food, but raised for milk. But in sections that are arid, cattle are raised for meat, as in the Argentine and Montana. In such places there is plenty of fresh meat.

Except for ham and bacon, meat has been advertised largely in the form of canned and tinned meat, and everything I've said here about the reasons for the popularity of canned food applies equally well to canned meats. None of this advertising has been consistent or serious enough to matter. As for the consumer, she has less faith in canned meat than she has in canned fruit and vegetables.

Let us go back to the beginning of the dinner. Suppose it starts as it shouldn't, but as so many American dinners do start, with something cold and spicy—tomato juice. We'll leave it at that. Tomato juice advertising has been sensible and tomato juice is usually a good product. The only criticism that we can make of this is the same as we made of the orange juice, and that is that tomato juice, while it does contain vitamins A, B, C, and everything up to Z apparently, is not good for people with acid digestion.

The biggest use of tomato juice is for breakfast. People who wake up in steam-heated rooms like the cold tonic slap of tomato juice or orange juice first thing in the morning. During Prohibition, people found out how fine a tomato juice cocktail was for a hangover. This, while no important part of the business, has, I am sure, done it no harm. The jump in popularity of tomato juice has been fantastic. In 1929 the pack in the United States was 185,000 cases. In 1937 it was over 13,000,000. Much of this is due to good advertising, but most of it to the public taste. Add to that the labor-saving in the kitchen. It's even easier to pour a glass of tomato juice than to squeeze out two oranges. Just

as squeezing out orange juice is easier than cooking prunes.

But we were talking about dinner. Having swallowed tomato juice, we go on to the soup, which, according to people who know about good food, ought to begin the meal.

The American people were not soup-eaters. The big pot on the back of the stove of every French household was seldom seen in America. Into that pot the French, or for that matter the Scandinavians or Italians, put everything good that came along. America's soup-eating dropped even further with the coming in of gas stoves. The cooking of good soup is a long, slow process. With a few exceptions, it takes hours. Few women are willing to spend hours cooking a soup, and few are willing to spend the extra money for gas or oil. Completely in line with the desires of the American woman is canned soup.

It began with Dr. John T. Dorrance. He went to Germany to study chemistry when he was a young man, early in the 1890's. While he was there he liked the many rich German soups and wondered why Americans didn't have them. He came back, went to work for his uncle, who owned the Joseph Campbell Preserve Company, which sold jams and condiments. The first thing he did was to get up a soup which could be canned. He began to advertise in 1905. The advertising is mediocre, has always been mediocre, but it has had a simple story to tell. Women wanted the soup, and it was cheap. And as everybody in the business will tell you, the important thing was that the advertising was persistent. It never stopped. If once Dr. Dorrance began to use a magazine, he kept right on as long as that magazine was published. He began it in 1905 and the Campbell Soup Company is keeping it up today—every issue of every weekly magazine, fifty-two times a year, monthlies twelve times,

and as often as possible in the newspapers. Because he was one of the earlier advertisers, he got a preferred position. He valued it greatly, and he was right. His advertisements appear nearly always on the first page after reading matter, that is, they do so in magazines where there is a little bit of distinction between reading matter and advertising.

Campbell's Soups spend two to two and a half million dollars a year in magazines alone, and they have 80 per cent of all the canned soup business in America. Next important is probably Heinz's. Third is Phillips'. Besides that, there are a number not so well known.

On January 2, 1937, Campbell's Soup ran an advertisement in which they said that the public had bought 37 per cent more Campbell's Soups in 1936 than in 1935. All food purchases had gone up, but that ad doesn't explain why this immense rise in Campbell's. In the beginning, Campbell's had been the only soup advertiser. They taught the American women to use canned soup. Then during the depression other companies began to compete heavily and Campbell's share of the soup business fell from about 90 per cent to somewhere near 65 per cent of the total. That didn't mean an actual drop in its business, because though it got a smaller share of the whole, its business actually went up. People bought Heinz's or Phillips', but they also bought more Campbell's Soup.

The Phillips Packing Company apparently did about \$7,000,000 worth of business on its soups, Campbell's about \$50,000,000, and Heinz about \$10,000,000.¹

Tomato soup is probably the most popular. The list prices for most kinds are 15 cents for Heinz's, 10 cents for

¹ *Printers' Ink Monthly*, June, 1937.

Campbell's, and 5 cents for Phillips'. This isn't accurate, because on most of Campbell's you can buy three cans for 25 cents. Also, Campbell's are condensed and so go farther. And at that these prices are usually cut for one kind of sale or another.

Of course, no canned soup tastes as good or is as good as a good homemade soup, but that is perhaps merely my opinion. I know there are people who prefer the taste of canned soups. Most canned vegetable soups have too much of the cheaper vegetables, like potatoes and turnips. Except at moments when vegetables are cheap, canned vegetable soups cost less than those made at home.

Besides these three big makers, there are plenty of others. Many of them have what is known as private brands, that is, a brand made by a local wholesaler, a chain, or a large store like Macy's (Lily White). All of these are giving Campbell's Soups sharp competition, so that after a while Campbell's may cease to grow or may have to do brighter advertising.

The mayonnaise on your salad comes next. Bottled mayonnaise, of course, is not so good as homemade. It is probably made of cottonseed oil and contains something which will not dissolve. Even bottled mayonnaise, however, goes bad easily. It has to be delivered fresh every day and is sold with large forces of salesmen, as any product must be which is delivered daily. Naturally, therefore, the advertisers of mayonnaise dwell on its freshness, its purity, its wholesomeness, and all the other qualities which cannot be proved.

Perhaps you are having a gelatin dessert instead of ice-cream. If so, it is probably Jell-O, Knox or Royal Gelatin. Knox Gelatine has been advertised for years in a sound and

sensible fashion with photographs, ideas and recipes which appeal to the housewife. It is usually unflavored and so tastes better when cooked than the others. At the moment, Jell-O advertising is much more successful. It hasn't better recipes but it has Jack Benny and a price-cut. All you need to do is to add boiling water.

It is good for you to get gelatin in your diet. Royal Gelatin, in order to make inroads on Jell-O, ran some copy several years ago attacking Jell-O (not by name) for being made out of a cow's hoof. "Pour a cup of hot water on our gelatin, smell, and pour it on another brand and smell." Of course, all gelatin comes from the same source. That was stopped by the Federal Trade Commission.

There's no harm in gelatin advertising. It has brought color and variety into the desserts of most households. In my own household I prefer to use the unbranded leaf gelatin, not because it is cheaper, although it is, but because it seems to me to give much better results. But most women wouldn't like it because it is not flavored and means extra work. I wouldn't like it either if I had to do my own cooking.

And now for the favorite dessert. Commercial ice-cream is not bad, but it's not usually real ice-cream. Among the ingredients used in the cheaper commercial grades are gelatine and Irish moss. These are harmless, but they have no food value. Commercial ice-cream selling from 25 cents to 50 cents a quart cannot be made with cream and must contain substitutes. Each manufacturer has a recipe which he calls a Mix. In this Mix, gelatine, cornstarch, or air are substituted for the proper ingredients of ice-cream. Ice-cream, of course, is sold by measure and not by weight, so the Mix is beaten up so that it fluffs up and gains in bulk.

Vanilla still is the most popular of flavors. Instead of using vanilla, commercial manufacturers often use vanillin, made from the oil of cloves. Vanilla costs more than vanillin. One of the ice-cream manufacturers said that he didn't think that the public should be informed about that because ". . . if the labeling at the present time is going to curtail the consumption of such a wholesome product as ice-cream, we feel that it is not the proper thing to do." He also said that they couldn't always use fresh fruit, but imitation fruit extracts. And this, too, was done for the good of the public.¹

It is an old scheme of the copy writer to take the worst aspects of a product and turn them into an advantage. Cheap ice-cream is adulterated, so the advertiser calls it pure. It is made by machinery, so there's a deal of talk about its homemade quality. There is a good commercial ice-cream, but it costs more.

Now for the sugar in your coffee—are you fussy about your brand? All the big refineries turn out the same fine, white quality. There is no difference between packaged and unpackaged sugar. The manufacturer puts some of his product in 100-pound bags, some in 10- or 5-pound cloth bags, and some in a 2-pound package. It is all the same sugar. But there is a difference of one or one-and-a-half cents in price between the loose and the packaged sugar. That makes the business of advertising a packaged brand sugar difficult. There is little to say. Indeed, there is nothing to say. Some of the refineries tried campaigns advertising purity and cleanliness. Their argument was that in a dirty shop the unpackaged sugar is exposed to dust and flies. The women

¹ Hearing before Subcommittee of Committee on Interstate and Foreign Commerce, House of Representatives, July and August, 1935.

didn't believe it. When one of the big chains had a quarrel with a refinery it threw out all the packaged goods, but carried the bulk sugar. The woman came in and said she wanted a package of Blank's sugar. The salesmen said, "We don't carry it in packages—but here's their big bag. I've just filled a little bag for you from it." The woman was entirely satisfied.

The advertisers did the best they could with the cleanliness issue. One such ad, I'm not sure whether it was for sugar or some other product, showed a cat sleeping in the cracker barrel, but there aren't any open cracker barrels today. They showed Johnny playing with his toys all around the sugar bag, and the cat running across the table while Mrs. Jones baked a cake. But it was such a failure that they had to drop it. The purity idea was also a failure.

The most successful advertising on sugar is that showing recipes. Jack Frost brand shows excellent recipes and insists that the results won't be good unless Jack Frost is used. Women believe this or at least some of them do. They are afraid of spoiling a fine cake, or they say, "Why take a chance? It doesn't cost any more than any other brand." Also, a certain amount of gratitude must figure in this. The woman who gets excellent recipes from an advertiser feels under obligation to him. Recipe advertising has been the best paying single device in food advertising.

Most big food advertisers and big agencies have special food kitchens with dietitians. They also hire cooks on the side to think up and try out new things to eat. They get up attractive cookbooks which are given free to the public. These bring real competition to regular cookbooks. Some recipe books that are especially good are Del Monte, Swans-

down Flour, Knox Gelatine, Worcester Salt, and Mueller's Spaghetti.

There is a drive on to make you drink tea instead of coffee. As one who is addicted to tea-drinking, this seems all right to me. The idea on which it is based is excellent—at least I think so; I used it myself in a novel about three years ago. Tea gives you energy. It picks you up. But the advertising man had to torture this simple idea and make it, not simple, but simple-minded by saying that the tea which picks you up and gives you energy also puts you to sleep. Drink a cup of hot tea before you go to bed at night and you'll get a good night's sleep; also, drink a cup of tea and it will fill you full of pep.

And then there is the peppermint to wind up with. Probably a Life Saver. Put a hole in the middle of these candies so that you get less candy than you would without the hole, and you pay twice as much for it as for a peppermint in the druggist's glass jar. And why not, if you like the shape and the package?

We have no room for coffee here. We go to the living-room for that, or, if you please, we will have it in the next chapter.

13. WHAT'S THE MATTER WITH THIS COFFEE?

WHEN I was a little girl, my mother used to send me to the grocer to ask for a pound of Mocha and Java coffee. The white-aproned Süd Deutscher behind the counter thrust his brass scoop into a bin marked Java and into a bin marked Mocha. Then he poured the lovely brown berries into a bag standing open on the brass scale.

At home, just before each meal, the beans were poured into the squat wooden coffee-grinder and one of us turned the handle and spread through the kitchen the most delicious aroma in the world, the smell of freshly ground coffee. A big old-fashioned coffee-pot stood on the stove. Into the freshly boiling water was thrown the newly ground coffee. A few drops of cold water to "settle it," and the coffee was done. Nobody ever said, "What's the matter with this coffee?" If you put enough coffee into the pot, it was good.

Only the most rigid honesty forces me to admit here—and how I hate to do it—that in those days coffee was shipped in the hold of slow ships from the Far East, and badly packed, so that much of it fermented before it arrived. We got so used to the fermented taste of our Mocha and Java that it is hard for us to be satisfied with any other.

Now coffee comes in fast modern ships carefully packed and protected from fermentation. Once here, it is repacked, it is packed a third and even a fourth time; it is packed so much that most of the people who buy coffee don't get a

chance to think about the coffee itself, they're so dazed by the packing. We get our coffee from the grocer in a nice shiny can, usually vacuum-packed, which means that no air can reach it. Yet with all that it is true that coffee is not so good as it was. This statement I do not make on the strength of my yearning for old, fermented Mocha and Java, or because I drink coffee black and sugarless and so am very fussy. It is based, not only on a personal taste, but also on facts well known in the coffee trade.

The housewife experiments with percolators, with drip coffee, and with Silex machines, and still most of the time the coffee isn't right. She is battered and bewildered by new packages and new brands, by advertising. Millions of dollars are pounding away at her with a blaze of music and speech. With tears in his voice, Maxwell House invites her to come and have a cup of coffee on an imaginary boat. He intimates that because his radio tenor has a sugary voice his coffee is better than other coffee. Chase & Sanborn yells: "Look at mine; I've put a date on it and that's why it's better."

The chief claim made by the advertising business for itself as a social force is that it raises the standard of living. Sometimes, as we have seen, it has done so. But when it comes to a good plain cup of coffee, advertising not only has done nothing to raise the standard, but it has done plenty to depress it, because it's the truth that in the day of the paper bag and the old-fashioned grinder, coffee not only tasted better, but was more digestible than it is today. And it was actually fresher.

We are a nation of coffee drinkers. The only people who drink more coffee than Americans are those of Scandinavia and Cuba. The average American drinks 13 pounds of cof-

fee a year, which ought to mean 572 cups a year. In England, the average person drinks only three-quarters of a pound in a whole year. Why then, with this huge consumption, is the usual cup of coffee in America less good and less digestible than it used to be? Is it the method of making? Is it the amount of coffee used? Is it the source of the coffee? All these figure in a minor degree, but they played as big a part in the past as they do now.

The important cause of deterioration depends on something else. No matter how good a brand of coffee may be, many of its users would grow dissatisfied with it. Customers are always changing about on brands of coffee. With some people the caffeine in coffee is slightly habit-forming. Where this is the case, the user has a tendency to need always a larger quantity. There is a limit though to the amount of coffee you can drink, and so if you need the caffeine, always want more of it and can't consume any more, you're apt to turn your discontent toward the brand you're using. But commonly people change brands of coffee because they get tired of the flavor or because they don't realize that their supply has been deteriorating in the kitchen.

There is a real deterioration in coffee, and often the trouble lies in the package itself.

The important thing about coffee is that it should be fresh. But what is fresh coffee? The green berry itself improves with age. But as soon as coffee is roasted, it starts to lose freshness. Still, as long as the brown berry is whole, it keeps its strength pretty well. It doesn't deteriorate fast, though it does lose flavor and though the oil does begin to oxidize. But the moment you grind the berry, its strength

starts to race away. The ideal fresh coffee is that just roasted and just ground, and of the two the fresh grinding is more important than the fresh roasting.

Coffee contains a lot of oil. When coffee stands a long time after it has been ground, the oil becomes rancid. Often when you open a fresh can of coffee your family will think the coffee good, and when you get to the bottom of the can the family will begin to complain.

William H. Ukers, an importer and authoritative writer on coffee, said in the *Tea & Coffee Trade Journal*:

The roasted berry is constructed of fibrous tissues formed into tiny cells visible only under the microscope, which are the "packages" wherein are stored the whole value of coffee, the aromatic oils. Like cutting up an orange, the grinding of coffee is the opening of surrounding tissue and pulp.

If a matter is as simple as that, how does it happen that the consumer of coffee has been so confused? It is because the whole business of coffee retailing is a mess.

There are actually 5,000 brands of coffee sold in the United States, and all the national distributors are worried. There are seven types of distributors—the independent retail grocer, the general store, the mail order house, the house-to-house wagon distributor, the special tea and coffee store, the department store, and the drugstore. Even Klein's in New York, straight sellers of women's clothing, now sell coffee, too, and the aroma of the ground coffee floats agreeably among the dresses and coats. Altogether there are about 400,000 places that sell coffee, aside from restaurants, and they sell a billion and a half pounds of coffee. Of this, the Atlantic & Pacific, with its 17,000 outlets, sells 125,000,000 pounds a year. This is more than any

nationally advertised brand can sell. Such brands are up against it. Naturally, then, they turn to advertising.

There is something about writing advertising that goes to people's heads. There always has been. The early advertisers of coffee were more optimistic than even our most spirited modern advertisers. The first ad of coffee printed was a handbill in London, in 1652. It was put out by Pasqua Rosée's Coffee House. He said that coffee was "a simple, innocent thing, which closeth the orifice of the stomach and fortifies the heat within. It much quickens the spirits, and makes the heart lightsome. It is good against sore eyes. It is very good to prevent miscarriages in child-bearing women." This man had a fine instinct about advertising. He knew that when you have a combination of a food and patent medicine, with a hint of a cosmetic, you have something irresistible. Nobody today has as yet advertised coffee as a patent medicine. I wonder why. It is one of the best tonics in the world. No one has yet advertised it as a cosmetic. That would take some doing. But I have faith in them—they'll find a way. Look at what they're doing already.

When the General Foods Corporation was organized, they paid somewhere around \$32,000,000 in stock for Maxwell House coffee, but Maxwell House coffee has shown no profit since, though 80 million pounds a year were sold at their peak. In 1936 they spent \$1,045,510 in radio and magazine advertising alone, without counting newspapers, circulars, and other items.¹ Just as difficult is the situation of Chase & Sanborn; hence its bright idea about dated coffee on which they spent \$3,684,973 in 1936 in magazines and radio alone.

¹ *National Publisher's Associates.*

The small retailer doesn't like to handle a nationally advertised brand. He can make more money by buying the green coffee, roasting it himself and selling it in paper bags. He also can bring in trade by roasting it in his own shop and grinding it there so that the odor of roasting and grinding—tantalizing to the appetite—reaches the passer-by. Shrewd retailers try to roast and grind their coffee at noon-time and at night, when passers-by are hungry, and they place the machine so that the odor will be blown to the street.

This situation makes coffee a bad product for the advertiser. But in another way it's a good product. It has what advertisers consider an important advantage: it is something that is used every day.

Coffee grew first in Abyssinia, Java, and Arabia. Now it has been made at home in many parts of the world. Most of the poorer coffee used in the United States comes from Brazil, and our better coffees come from Central America. On the high slopes of Central America a fine quality is grown. Most coffees sold in this country are blended. The most costly would contain two-thirds of fine Sumatra and one-third Mocha. The cheapest would be largely Santos coffee from Brazil. Restaurants use a good deal of Bogotá coffee. But the average coffee, not the best, but good coffee, drunk by Americans is made up of a blend of the best Central American coffee with some Brazilian. Many Americans prefer the cheapest Brazilian coffee. Their tastes have been so coarsened that they like its harsh, rough tang.

Many people like the strong taste of Chase & Sanborn coffee. But the strong point in Chase & Sanborn advertising is not the taste, but the dating on its packages, or maybe

Charlie McCarthy. What does dating mean? What does it amount to?

Chase & Sanborn used to be distributed in the way of all other coffees until it was bought by Standard Brands, which also owns Fleischmann's Yeast. Yeast has to be consumed and delivered fresh so that Fleischmann has a system of small trucks all over the country which make deliveries frequently, perhaps three times a week, perhaps every day. Well, then, why not deliver coffee in the same wagons and save money? And why not, said some bright person, go a step farther, market the coffee with the date, and show that it was just as fresh as the yeast? A bright idea—so bright that it was hard to see clearly behind the glitter.

The original plan was to guarantee and deliver fresh coffee every ten days. All coffee unsold after ten days was taken back. But now on the radio Chase & Sanborn promises to deliver fresh coffee every three days. It is generally accepted that the deterioration of ground coffee in the first three days is small compared to what takes place later.

If you will listen to the radio talk carefully, you will hear Chase & Sanborn say that the date your grocer gets the coffee is stamped on the bag.

But what guarantee does Chase & Sanborn make that the coffee is delivered to the grocer immediately after it has been roasted? One cynical customer said to me, "How do we know when they take a bag back that they don't just put another date on it?"

In spite of Charlie McCarthy, Chase & Sanborn coffee actually may be less fresh than most coffee packed in an undated tin. This is why. Coffee in tins is packed by a vacuum method, which means that all the air is kept out. Coffee so packed remains fresh in the can until the can is

opened. But because they were delivering "fresh coffee" every ten days, Chase & Sanborn decided that they didn't need the vacuum pack or the tin can. Instead, they ground the coffee and packed it in fiber boxes. That costs three cents less to pack than the vacuum tin. Now, because of the depression, Chase & Sanborn packs its coffee in paper bags instead of cartons. These cartons are treated with some kind of protective cover to keep the air out, but naturally they do not do it anything like as well as a can. Besides, they cannot be vacuum-packed.

It is true that no ground coffee keeps fresh, but it keeps better in a vacuum-packed can than in a carton or paper bag. It is also true that while coffee keeps fresh as long as it is sealed in a can, vacuum-packed coffee grows stale more quickly after the can has been opened than does fresh coffee after grinding.

But Chase & Sanborn, arguing from the undeniable fact that coffee ought to be fresh, go on to prove that theirs, ground and packed in paper bags for three days, is fresh. This method of arguing from an undeniable fact to nonsense is one that is used by our most successful columnists. They begin with a paragraph or two of clear thought that carries you along, and if you don't watch out you slip right into sophistry and nonsense without knowing what is happening to you. This is an old trick in the advertising business. It is much better to begin an ad with a truth that cannot be denied. And then, when the customer says, "Well, that's so," you go on and hand him a wallop.

Most reliable is the advertising of Safeway Stores, which urges you to have your coffee ground freshly when you buy it. Eggs and apples, they say, keep better in nature's package, so does coffee. Once you grind the coffee and put it in

a paper bag, you might better compare it with applesauce.

A good deal of noise is made by various advertisers about their steel-cut coffee. When coffee is ground by the steel-cut method, all the chaff is blown out. That sounds nice and clean, but the truth is that such coffee doesn't compare with other grinding where the chaff has been left in. Also, steel-cut coffee is wasteful. The grind is too coarse. To extract full flavor from your coffee, you need a finer grind; so you have to use more coffee with the steel-cut method than with other grinds. Still, that sells more coffee.

The "universal" grind is also too coarse for economical use. The finer the grind the less of dry coffee you will need.

As for French coffee, it isn't a different kind of coffee or a different way of preparation that gives the harsh, bitter taste, and the French don't always add chicory. When coffee is roasted, it can be done to any shade from light brown to black. American coffee is usually medium brown. The French like theirs roasted black. That accounts for the difference in taste.

There are many products in which it is hard for the consumer to find out what's good and what's not. But about coffee you can easily learn the truth. It is your fault if you get a bad product. All you have to do is to buy your coffee in the bean, freshly roasted, and grind it at home as you need it. Of course, if you are a busy woman you aren't going to do anything of the kind.

Well, then, if you won't, the next best thing is to buy your coffee where you can watch it ground and to buy it in small quantities, half a pound at a time if your family is small. And if you do buy canned ground coffee, remember that it will begin to go bad the moment the can is opened. If you use up a can in a couple of days, it won't matter

much, but if you keep it around for a week or more, even though the cover has been carefully put back on each time, the coffee will be rancid, indigestible and unpalatable. *Consumers Union* says that coffee keeps better in the refrigerator.

Bear in mind that if you buy packed coffee you pay anywhere from a cent to five-and-a-half cents extra for the packing. Obviously, then, it is best to go to the local grocer and buy his best loose coffee and buy only a little at a time. If you are willing to pay five cents more to get your coffee in a nice can, either buy it in the bean or in the half-pound size. The half-pound costs a cent more than the pound, but is worth it.

14. A CIGARETTE BY ANY NAME

THE most desperate copy writers in the advertising business are those who have to write about cigarettes. What can they say? Tests have shown that hardly anyone can distinguish one cigarette from another.

A few years ago there was a lively campaign advertising Old Gold cigarettes. It was hugely successful for a while, because it gave the public a chance to play a game. The customer did not merely read about the cigarette. He played a part. When an actor can make the audience sing along with him, the audience feels it has had a good time. It, too, has played a part; it has done something and not been merely an observer.

That's the way it was with Old Golds. The theme was that, blindfolded, you could distinguish an Old Gold from other cigarettes. Everywhere people tied handkerchiefs over their eyes while they took puffs of Chesterfields, Old Golds, Luckies and Camels. But there was a queer kickback. Most smokers were surprised to find that they couldn't recognize their own favorite brand and couldn't tell it from any of the others. Advertising people looked on the whole thing as a joke. It was said that even the people who wrote the advertising couldn't place their own brand without looking at the label. John B. Watson, the psychologist, then with the J. Walter Thompson Company, made some tests himself and said that it was impossible for people to distinguish one cigarette from another. *Fortune* says you can't win a

cigarette market on taste alone—that no brand ever has.

But though the campaign had this kickback, on the whole it enormously increased the users of Old Gold cigarettes. Anyway, the public forgets fast, and once again nearly everybody thinks he can smoke only one brand of cigarette. A few brands of cigarettes are union-made, but many people of ardent union sympathies don't smoke them, because of this illusion about pet brands.¹

The cigarette people say weakly that you have to keep your eyes open to distinguish the taste of one cigarette from another. Closing the eyes changes the conditions so that judgment is affected. But some actual open eye tests have been made by Consumers' Union. These people were given two tests. On the first test five brands were used. The names were covered with India ink after careful investigation proved that India ink on the outside made no difference in the flavor. Of the five cigarettes two were duplicates. Most of those who took the test made a flat failure. They couldn't pick out the duplicate. They couldn't tell a flavored cigarette from a non-flavored, and they couldn't recognize a brand name from the taste. Only 7 per cent did well in all the tests. Then a second test was given to the same people, but not on the same day. On this second test only one person made good. This although the second test was easier than the first. The women who took these tests were much surer than the men that they could recognize their pet brands, and so the debacle among them was greater.

Tobacco experts have the greatest difficulty in recogniz-

¹ Axton Fisher Tobacco Company, maker of Spuds and Twenty Grand, was the first large tobacco company that was completely unionized. Also union made are Kool, Raleigh, and most of the 10-cent brands.

ing the popular brands. The reason is this: that it isn't the tobacco that is static in popular cigarettes, it is the flavoring. The flavoring in most cases is so strong that it kills the taste of tobacco. There are seven or eight brands of unflavored cigarettes.

So pity the poor copy writer. He has millions of dollars to spend, and nothing to say!

One of the big advertising agencies had to have a new campaign on Fatima. All the executives stayed in after the office closed for a special meeting, and all of them gathered around the big show-off table in the customers' room. No time for dinner, just send a boy out for sandwiches, milk, coffee, cigarettes. The telephone girl had to stay on; there might be a sudden emergency.

But no idea came. They argued and they debated until two o'clock in the morning. Some went into their own offices and held their heads and thought in quiet seclusion. At last, at two o'clock in the morning, one of the biggest of them all burst into the conference. In his hand he held a scrap of paper about four inches square. He waved it triumphantly. "I've got it! Listen, boys, here it is—'What a whale of a difference a few cents make!' Isn't that a whale of a slogan?" The whale sounded to some of them more like a sardine. Millions of dollars were spent on this product of six hours of intense thinking.¹ Millions of cigarette smokers will remember it. Did it even make one person buy a Fatima? I doubt it.

In 1935 the American Tobacco Company spent \$12,115,-

¹ Another example of such cogitation—two advertising agencies, the George Batten Company and Barton, Durstine & Osborn, were to combine. Hours were spent in conference thinking up a name. The result was Batten, Barton, Durstine & Osborn. Fortunately, the trade simplified this into B. B. D. & O.—and no jokes, please.

180 advertising Lucky Strike cigarettes. Liggett & Myers Tobacco Company, advertising Chesterfields, spent \$21,103,290, and R. J. Reynolds Tobacco Company, on Camels, \$16,801,448.¹ With the exception of the General Motors Company, these are the biggest advertisers in America. Add Old Gold, and these spent about \$52,000,000 in 1936 in newspapers, magazines and radio.

Now imagine yourself as a copy writer trying to think up ideas good enough to spend fifty million dollars on, and with nothing whatever to say. Naturally some of the most ridiculous and out-of-taste advertising of the last few years has been that of cigarettes.

Most times it is futile for an outsider to go to an advertiser with an idea for a campaign. To be good, an idea has to be integrated with the whole sales policy of the company and with all the advertising that has gone before. You have to know the dealer, the company policy, the situation on stock, and the rivals. So that what may look to an outsider like a clever idea is usually unrelated, or is contrary to the policy of the advertiser. On top of that, the outsider, in his innocence, may be bringing you something you already have on hand, and when you use it may insist that you stole it from him. But so desperate was the fix of the tobacco people that for several years they had an office on Fifth Avenue for the single purpose of receiving outside ideas. You didn't have to be an advertising man. You just had to come in with something snappy.

Though this sounds casual, we must not underestimate the importance of these ideas or of the copy writer's work. The cigarette business grew huge almost altogether through

¹ These figures are from the Publishers Information Bureau.

advertising. The war helped along. After all wars there has been a great increase in smoking. But advertising clinched what the war began, and did a much bigger job besides in the building up of cigarette sales.

In the beginning of this century, "real men" smoked cigars; only sissies, foreigners, and an occasional fast woman smoked cigarettes. All cigarettes, except Fatimas, were either American or Turkish. It was about 1913 that it occurred to the R. J. Reynolds Company to mix Turkish and domestic tobacco, and the result was a Camel. The taste of this mixed cigarette pleased the public and has become the basis of most American popular cigarettes. This typical blend is ¹

	Per Cent
Bright tobacco from Virginia, Georgia, and the Carolinas	55
Burley from Kentucky	25
Turkish	15
Fast-burning Maryland	5

To this mixture are added licorice, brown sugar, herbs, maple sugar, and honey. But these pleasant ingredients do not flavor the cigarette. They are used for treating the tobacco. The flavor is added afterward. The basis of flavoring is rum, but it may also contain chocolate, vanilla, tonka, coumarin, sherry, peach, orange, geranium and angelica. Sounds lovely. It doesn't really taste that good, does it?

Up to 1913 America had consumed about four billion cigarettes a year, many of them Turkish. In 1915, when Camels appeared, this jumped to fifteen billion. By 1936 the figure had reached one hundred and sixty-three billion.

¹ *Fortune*, March, 1936.

This is about sixty-five packages a year for every man, woman and child in the United States.

One of the Camel ideas in the beginning was to cut out all premiums. Before that all cheap cigarettes packed some kind of little premium. Most of us can remember saving pictures of baseball players or actresses. We had a hard time that way because my father smoked only cigars and a good deal of swapping was necessary to gather the few soiled and dog-eared pictures. On Camel packages to this day is the announcement that all the money you pay goes for cigarettes and none for premiums, though now none of the other brands give premiums either. By 1917, when we went into the war, Camel was the largest-selling cigarette in the United States. During the war, they made literally an army of new customers. The government made a ruling that cigarette purchases for the army should be in proportion to the already existing sale of a brand. That sent plenty of Camels to Europe and turned the army into Camel smokers. After the war millions kept it up, if only as a sentimental memory of those lovely days in the trenches.

"Walk a Mile for a Camel" became a national catchword. Perhaps such catchwords make all men in this country brothers. Maybe if you meet John Smith of Seattle and he smokes Camels, you feel he is your brother. And maybe if he is competing with you on a job you withdraw because he's a brother Camel-smoker—maybe.

The first advertising showed pictures of camels on the desert with the slogan, "The Camels are coming." This was to indicate the Turkish content. Both the name and the pictures of camels have become old-fashioned. It was easy to get rid of the picture, but today the name Camel

seems somewhat dated. It isn't smart and catchy, like Lucky Strike, or elegant, like Chesterfield. Later the camels disappeared and girls appeared in the ads. But the girls never smoked in those ads, and their legs were hidden. Nowadays, of course, the girls smoke in the Camel ads.

Trying to overcome the handicap of their old-fashioned name, Camels now emphasize in all their ads the words, "Camel's Costlier Tobaccos," and say that they're made from more expensive tobaccos than any other popular brand. But how can we tell and why should we care since the flavor drowns the taste of the tobacco?

For several years Camels have advertised themselves as a patent medicine. They pick you up "Because they don't get your wind," or you smoke them "For digestion's sake." That worked. In the year 1936 Camels sold 30 per cent of the hundred and fifty billion cigarettes smoked in the United States. I defy anybody to prove that any cigarette improves digestion, except, of course, that one cigarette you smoke after a meal may make you sit still for a few minutes instead of dashing off immediately. (It is the opinion of many doctors that it is not the nicotine that is indigestible in cigarettes, but the essential oils.) But you do "get a lift with a Camel." Of course you also get it with any other cigarette. What happens is that the first cigarette you smoke irritates the adrenal glands. They shoot adrenalin into the system and cause an increase of blood sugar, which makes you feel more lively. Each succeeding cigarette has less of the same effect until you get the natural reaction in that familiar leaden feeling which comes from smoking too much.

The American Medical Association and the New York Academy of Medicine were bothered by this Camel cam-

paign. *Time*, although it runs Camel advertising, quoted doctors who said, "The evidence seems to indicate that nicotine is at least one of the toxic factors in cigarette smoking,' and 'other toxic factors, ammonia, pyridine and pyridine derivatives, cyanides and sulpho-cyanides, arsenic.'" ¹ The newspapers evidently didn't consider this good news. They didn't print it.

But to the big cigarette makers, the A.M.A. is merely an annoying mosquito. Says *Tide*, February 15, 1937, "In 1937 Camels continued its patent medicine drive against the taboos, trying to get out of the public mind the 'coffin nail' and 'pimpstick' connection."

Women seem to like Lucky Strikes better than other brands. Perhaps "Reach for a Lucky instead of a sweet" had something to do with the preference, and the toasting idea, which appeals to women because they understand it. Or can it be because Lucky Strike advertising has been louder than that of any other cigarette?

On Luckies it isn't the advertising agency, but George Washington Hill, president of the Company, who decides the basic principles. Stories about Mr. Hill and his ways run through the agencies. Even the dance program of the Lucky Strike Radio Orchestra is rehearsed in Mr. Hill's presence and altered and rearranged according to his pleasure.

"Lucky Strike advertising has certainly been the most alarming, sensational—and most subversive. The advertising has been divided into four copy angles—"Toasting"; 'Anti-Sweet'; 'Ancient Prejudice'; 'Double-Chin.' ² The idea was that through toasting the cigarette was freed of throat-

¹ George Seldes, *Freedom of the Press*, p. 51.

² *Fortune*, March, 1930.

irritating quality. Out of this arose the rash of testimonials.

I wonder if any reader believes that Lauritz Melchior finds Luckies gentle on his throat because "it's toasted." But the toasting idea caught on. It's fantastic. All cigarette tobacco has to be toasted. And the fumes of any tobacco dryer, says *Fortune* (January, 1931), are maddening to the eyes, choking to the lungs, and painful to the head, which proves, according to George Washington Hill, that the irritants are removed from the tobacco by heat. This is a remarkable bit of commercial illogic which leaves chemists gasping. I suppose if a steak was burnt a bit and you were half choked by the fumes, the steak after that would be very pure and non-irritating.

For a time Luckies' tobacco was toasted with violet rays, and they sounded fine—whatever they accomplished.

But the anti-sweet campaign was the best seller. Mr. Hill saw a fat woman eating candy and got the idea for "Reach for a Lucky instead of a sweet." This was a deplorable idea and a perfectly honest one, because cigarettes destroy the appetite for food. The same chemical reaction which gives you a lift from a Camel by increasing your blood sugar also decreases your hunger. As the blood sugar increases, you need less food. Many a busy man and more busy women smoke a hasty cigarette when they are hungry and can't get food, and find temporary satisfaction.

George Seldes in *Freedom of the Press* tells how in the middle of this reaching "for a Lucky," "Dr. Ben Jablons, authorized by the Medical Association of New York, made a public statement that 'excessive use of tobacco to kill the appetite is a double-edged sword, for nicotine poisoning and starvation both leave dire results in their train.'" But no newspaper published this.

But "sugar men, candy men and Senator Smoot protested. The campaign was made a focal point for an attack on testimonials in general, and accusations that youth was being misled. Mr. Hill had the curious notion that by stirring up so much discussion of sweets, he was really aiding the sale and distribution of sugar products." About that time the Federal Trade Commission "persuaded an unnamed Tobacco Manufacturer to 'cease and desist' from unfair competitive methods, and particularly from testimonials in their more artificial form and from two specific statements regarding cigarettes and *avoirdupois*. The company was not specified, but there is no question that the anti-fat Lucky series represents a distinct modification of its Anti-Sweet predecessor."¹

Since the public could no longer "Reach for a Lucky," another slant had to be thought up, and there was a campaign about double chins, also based on weight reduction.

Luckies were the first to use testimonials,² but the others followed right along. Most of them are silly and apparently an amazing number of them come from people who never smoke at all. But Luckies seem to have got the biggest bag when they signed up ten senators. You've seen photographs of Senator Reynolds of North Carolina and others boasting that Luckies are good for their throats. The Lucky Strike people paid a thousand dollars apiece for these boosts from senators. For movie stars they pay six times as much, \$5,000 to the star and \$1,000 to the studio.³

¹ *Fortune*, March, 1930.

² A marijuana ring is said to have done a business of a million dollars a year. The remarkable thing is that these cigarettes have never been publicly endorsed by any famous athlete.—Howard Brubaker in the *New Yorker*.

³ *Tide*, February 15, 1937.

Sometimes there's a slip-up as when James Cagney said there was nothing tough about his throat and that's why he smoked Old Golds. But "next day in the Hollywood correspondence was an innocent little piece about Mr. Cagney, which said he wasn't tough at all, and among other things, didn't smoke."¹

The Chesterfield advertising with its simple statement, "They Satisfy," may seem pretty pointless, but it has also sold its billions and it is much the most dignified of the four. Everything about Chesterfield is kept looking pure and neutral. The white package looks cool. The advertising is spacious and quiet. Of course there are nonsensical commendations.

The best remembered Old Gold slogan is "Not a cough in a carload." This is really a masterpiece of a slogan—it has rhythm, and ring, and bulk.

For a while Old Gold prize contests threw something of a monkey wrench into the cigarette business. But on the whole they were boomerangs. Neal O'Hara said in the *New York Post*:²

No one but Uncle Sam was the big beneficiary of the big contest held by a major cigarette company last year. He collected some \$4,500,000 in tobacco taxes on 75,000,000 extra packs sold, \$925,000 in postage spent by contestants and more than \$35,000 in income taxes from the major prize winners.

Mr. O'Hara's figures are too low, but his point is quite correct.

In 1936 Old Gold offered prizes of \$40,000 to those who could put a name to a series of pictures. This caused so

¹ *Partners in Plunder*, p. 95. From *Advertising & Selling*, Aug. 16, 1934.

² February 18, 1938.

much excitement that they followed it in 1937 with a \$250,000 contest, this one merely for some amateur advertising copy. In the first contest two million people sent in 90,000,000 Old Gold wrappers. Thousands of correct solutions were sent in. These solvers were given a second contest. So many got the second right that they were put through a third, and then at last the prizes were distributed for an essay. You can imagine how many soreheads there were among these people. The suits of disgruntled solvers are still in the courts. This did not do Old Gold much good in 1938. The actual number of extra packages sold was almost the same as the number of wrappers turned in at the contest—about 90,000,000. Altogether this first contest cost \$2,000,000. In short, it didn't pay. In the trade it is believed that in 1937 Old Golds spent half as much as Camels for advertising and selling, yet sold only one-sixth as much goods.¹

Just what Old Gold themselves thought of these contests you can guess by looking at their advertising for the spring of 1938. Other cigarette advertisers didn't like it a bit. An attractive elderly man is looking at a newspaper supposedly carrying someone else's ad. This someone else's shows a big strong man covered with medals and muscles, with the headline, "Smoke Cure-All cigarettes." And the attractive Old Gold man says, "Shucks! All I want is a pleasant smoke."

In Spud cigarettes menthol is used as a flavoring. This use of menthol made Spuds almost a new cigarette, and a popular one. There was considerable advertising with a steady increase in sales. But for some reason the advertis-

¹ Tide, March 1, 1938.

ing stopped for a while, and Kool, a similar cigarette, began to advertise. Immediately the sales of Spuds dropped and those of Kool climbed up. Since then the Spud campaign has grown steadily smaller while Kool has grown larger and the sales have gone along with the advertising. There seems to be no difference between these two cigarettes; the one that advertises most gets the business.

And now we come to a sad disappointment—the diethylene-glycol notion which burst in the face of Philip Morris. It's a nice illustration of where the advertiser can be led by the search for a new scheme. Philip Morris bet on diethylene-glycol, and advertised it. And then came the news stories about deaths from diethylene mixed with sulf-anilamide. The public memory on names, especially such long technical names, is weak. It might easily have jumped on diethylene-glycol used in Philip Morris cigarettes and overlooked the fact that it had not been mixed with sulf-anilamide. Also that the medicine had been taken internally, not smoked. The diethylene really did the cigarettes no harm, nor did it hurt the people who smoked them. But the advertising might have done considerable damage. But to begin from the beginning.

Philip Morris was originally an English cigarette made of Turkish tobacco, with a high-class clientele. The American owners decided to change its contents to the mixed American and Turkish blend and to compete with the big popular brands. But they kept the dignified dark brown wrapper of the Turkish cigarette. The English cigarette had been sold at 25 cents. The first ad of the new series emphasized the price cut: "Philip Morris now only 15 cents." The cigarette was entirely different. All that was left was the name, but the advertising failed to mention that.

One of the toughest problems in cigarettes is trying to keep them fresh and moist. Even in the sealed package they get stale and dry on the dealers' shelves. A cigarette, by the way, is moister at the beginning of a smoke than at the end. The little moisture that it contains at the beginning condenses, so perhaps one way to get moist cigarettes is never to smoke more than half of each one. There's an advertising idea to boost sales!

Glycerine is the agent used to help keep cigarettes fresh. But glycerine is drying to the throat. Philip Morris, with the help of a number of chemists, got hold of a substitute—diethylene-glycol, which when smoked is less drying to the throat than glycerine.

Philip Morris was so convinced about this that they sent the advertising out, not to the public, but to doctors and chemists. Ads in the *Journal of the American Dental Association*, in the *Journal of the American Medical Association*, in *Engineering Chemistry*, etc., told the story. They reached about half the doctors and dentists in the country, and they handed out as many free packages as the doctors would take. Papers and charts prepared by their chemists were also sent out.

And then after all this scientific folderol had been going on for a year or so, a story broke in the newspapers which probably also broke Philip Morris's heart. Seventy-three people died as a direct result of taking the new Elixir Sulfanilamide. It was a sensational and horrible story—blazing in the newspapers for weeks. That had no relation to Philip Morris or its advertising. But then pathologists, working under the Food and Drug Administration in St. Louis, announced that the seventy-three deaths were due to the mixture of sulfanilamide with diethylene-glycol of which

Philip Morris had boasted so loudly in the scientific journals. In these cases, the diethylene-glycol had been taken internally, not smoked; and it had been taken in considerable quantity.

But under date of August 17, 1938, W. G. Campbell, Chief of the United States Food and Drug Administration, writes me that "diethylene-glycol has been shown to be toxic. We consequently regard foods containing it as adulterated within the meaning of the Food and Drugs Act. This law gives us no authority over cigarettes. We have had no occasion to investigate the possible harmfulness of diethylene-glycol as an ingredient in cigarettes. Certainly no harmful substance should be added in cigarettes, although the amount of this substance which proved toxic in the Elixir Sulfanilamide tragedy of last year was much larger than the amounts which we understand are incorporated into cigarettes."

Philip Morris had only one good break in this disaster. They had never advertised the diethylene-glycol idea to the public. It is clear that they had only the best intentions. "A new idea"—it's the beacon light that blinds advertisers to a lot they ought to see. Whatever the doctors thought, the public knew nothing of it and the sales went up big, partly because of shrewd merchandising and partly because Philip Morris has a dwarf on the payroll who keeps saying "Call for Philip Morris."

The rise in cigarette sales is gratifying to advertising men. But less pleasing is that of the ten-cent brands which have galloped along with practically no advertising at all. In 1931 the president of R. J. Reynolds had said: ¹

¹ *Fortune*, Nov., 1932.

Camels will not be disconcerted by the advance of a competitor so long as advertising is mainly responsible for it; but when a cigarette moves up without a maximum of advertising we will take serious notice.

I imagine they got thoroughly disconcerted the next year.

For a long time there had been ten-cent brands, but they didn't cut any figure. In 1931, in the depths of the depression, the price of raw tobacco had declined to its lowest since 1914.¹ Although the price of tobacco was so low, Lucky Strike, Camel, Chesterfield, and Old Gold all raised their prices 45 cents a hundred wholesale. This was followed by an immediate decrease in sales. Nobody had any money, tobacco was cheap, and yet the Big Four raised their prices.

Some of the smaller manufacturers began to push a ten-cent package. The sale of cigarette papers and "makings" had gone up. But people not quite up against it preferred the ten-cent package. Among the leaders were Paul Jones, Wings ("Cut out ballyhoo and fancy packing and let the public have what it wants . . . a good smoke."), and Twenty Grand (by the maker of Spuds).

The 15-centers said that the tobacco in these wasn't so good, but, as we have shown, that is hard to prove. The 10-centers differ widely in quality and many authorities say that the best 10-centers are as good as the 15-centers.²

On the Big Four the jobber and the dealer split a profit of less than two cents on a package. But the 10-centers made a lower price to the dealer, so he came out all right. The 10-centers went zooming along. And then in 1933 the Big Four started a tremendous price-slashing campaign so that the big chains, like A & P, were selling Luckies, Cam-

¹ *Op. cit.*

² *Fortune*, *op. cit.*

els, Chesterfields, and Old Golds at ten cents a package. No doubt that hurt the 10-centers, but it left the dealer without any profit on the Big Four cigarettes.

Since then, thinking that the 10-centers have been pushed back a bit or perhaps finding that the dealer had to have a little profit, the Big Four raised their prices again until they were sold at retail at thirteen cents a package in the big chains. But the sale of 10-cent cigarettes keeps right along. *Barron's* financial weekly estimates that their production runs as high as 18,000,000,000 a year, which would be about 11 per cent of 1937 cigarette production. Philip Morris keeps its price at 15 cents, so ensuring a better profit to the dealer, and so getting his help and making pals.

From the point of view of what pays in advertising, it is interesting to look at these figures of sales in the United States: ¹

	Per Cent 1935	Per Cent 1931
Lucky Strike	23.8	39.3
Camel	27.5	29.1
Chesterfield	26.7	21.7
Old Gold	4.3	6.7
All others	17.7	3.2

Camel in 1935 and 1936 had its two biggest years since 1931. In 1936 sales for all brands ran 12 per cent over 1935.²

Now if nothing influences these returns except advertising, it would look as though Lucky Strike and Old Gold advertising hasn't been so good, Camel has been good enough, Chesterfield has been excellent. But it would be a mistake to draw any such conclusion because all these figures may

¹ Media Records, Inc., republished in the *Chicago Tribune*.

² *Tide*, Feb. 15, 1937.

be upset this year or next. And this upsets everything. Wings, which does no advertising, but sells for ten cents a package, has fifth place in cigarette sales.³

³ Some of the 10-centers in 1938 began to do a little radio advertising, which may change the price set-up. But they had already built up a large sale without advertising.

15. BY YOUR SKIN AND YOUR TEETH

YOU have no doubt been annoyed by the wild claims and offended by the mawkish sentimentality that are smeared over the toothpaste-powder-brush hullabaloo. Because of this advertising the American people spends about \$50,000,000 a year for dentifrices.¹

But a nation doesn't spend \$50,000,000 a year for seductive words. There's a sound reason both for the advertising and the money paid out for dentifrices. Not more than 30 per cent of the people of this country brush their teeth regularly. Only about one person in three. Two of the three have still to be taught. These are the figures on which the whole industry proceeds. Each manufacturer, of course, is trying to beat his competitor, but one way of beating him is to get in first with new users. So he plans his advertising to reach the untrained 70 per cent. You'll not move these beginners by talking about cleanliness or health, or they'd have started the toothbrush long ago. You've got to dynamite them into taking care of their teeth. You've got to make them afraid to smile because their teeth look wrong, and afraid to breathe because their breath smells wrong. You've got to make them think that brushing the teeth acts like a witch's charm and brings the beaus and the girls running. This is sad, but it is true.

It's even possible to make a good case for some of the

¹ Manufacturers' wholesale volume was about \$31,000,000 in 1937.

cheapest of this toothy gush. The Colgate Company is a decent house with a good product at a reasonable price. Ten years ago they had the notion that if they treated the public with respect, if they told the simple facts about toothpaste, that perhaps the customer would believe and buy. So they had a campaign that told the truth, that a dentifrice cannot cure pyorrhea or whiten teeth, that all it can do is to keep the teeth clean. The advertising was intelligent and looked well. The American Dental Association gave its hearty approval, not the usual fake "Dentists recommend," but the official approval of the Association. What was the result? Colgate's do not say that this campaign was a failure, but that "it failed to increase the sales."

Well, if an expenditure of several hundred thousand dollars failed to increase your sales, what would you do? Probably just about what Colgate's ad-men are doing. They are telling sentimental and out-of-taste stories in foolish pictures. One is the story of Phil, who wears a dinner coat and has a bad breath. He says, "I pay the check and Tom takes her home." Then he uses Colgate's, and after that he takes her home and Tom is out in the cold. Did Tom stop using Colgate's, or what? Obviously, Colgate's doesn't do this kind of advertising because the company likes it, but because the customer likes it. Yet Colgate's is sensible compared to some other dentifrice advertisers.

Listerine starts off an ad with a picture of a fish and a little ichthyological information they got from an encyclopaedia. For some esoteric reason they or their advertising agents think that the hinged teeth of a pike will make you buy Listerine toothpaste. And they go on to prove to you that their paste isn't a paste at all, but a powder. Why? Because the tendency today is away from paste and toward

powder. The paste people are worried. So instead of trying to prove that their paste is as good as a powder, Listerine thinks it cleverer to tell you that their paste is a powder "in its more modern form."

Are these millions all wasted? I think not. Dentists agree that neither toothpowder nor toothpaste helps to preserve your teeth or even to keep your mouth clean. The United States Government seems to be of this opinion, because dentifrices are taxed under the heading of cosmetics. What counts is the massage of the gums, and that can be done just as well with the bare brush. A few dentifrices which contain a coarse abrasive damage the enamel, but most of them are harmless.

Toothpastes which foam have soap as the basic material. The non-foaming ones owe the paste-like consistency to some gum like gum tragacanth, or to vegetable mucins like psyllium seeds, or Irish moss. The abrasive is magnesium carbonate and calcium carbonate and sometimes kieselguhr, an infusorial earth resulting from the decay of sea-shells. Toothpastes always contain glycerine, up to 30 per cent, as a softener. Sugar or honey are sometimes used for this purpose, but this is a bad practice. If you brush your teeth to remove food particles which may ferment and produce acids, why try to do it with sugar or honey which may remain and do the same thing?

The toothpowders consist of magnesium carbonate, calcium carbonate and sometimes chalk or kieselguhr. The aromatic principle of either paste or powder is peppermint, anise, or other ethereal oil. The foaming toothpowders, like Lyon's, contain soap-powder. Some powders and pastes contain an antiseptic such as thymol. Most of these in-

gredients are all right, but none of them is of any special help. Plain salt and soda are as good as anything else.

Consider a tube of toothpaste that costs thirty cents. Salt and soda that would do the same kind of work would cost about three cents. Of the thirty cents, ten cents goes for profit, ten cents for advertising, and only ten cents for product and overhead. I venture to say that if you tell these figures to customers, at least half of them will continue to pay the thirty cents just the same because they like the neat package, the pretty label, and the taste. And because deep down they have a sneaking suspicion that maybe there's something in the advertiser's promises. There is a sensible reason, too. When used by the average child or man the jar of salt and soda soon looks pretty messy. The can of toothpowder never does. The fussy housewife finds it neater to pour a little powder out of the can or to squeeze a little paste on the brush as she needs it. Also, a pleasant flavor is worth twenty-nine or thirty-nine cents to many people.

Manufacturers know that the package is more important than what it contains. Most of us are moved by pretty colors, graceful shapes, by a pleasant perfume and an agreeable taste. Organizations like Consumers Union and many writers of good books for the help of the consumer don't pay enough attention to this.

The talk of salt and soda alarms Mr. Allan B. McIntyre, president of the Association of National Advertisers. He fears that people would be so disappointed to find that their nice packages are no better than ordinary salt and soda that they would stop cleaning their teeth altogether. Well, maybe they would. Maybe if you didn't bribe them by promises of eternal health and beauty they wouldn't clean their teeth night and morning.

As for the toothbrush—dentists are by no means sure that everybody should use one. A piece of cotton or something else soft is better for people with thin enamel. But anyway the advertising line about special designs in brushes is pitiable. Long bristles, short bristles, uneven bristles, long brush, short brush, two rows, three rows—and then along came Rubber-set with such a clever twist. They took the handle, gave it a cork-screw curl, and they had a “comfortable natural grip.” What is the toothbrush anyway—a golf club?

There are cheap brushes and expensive brushes. About one toothbrush in three sold is a Dr. West. The president of the company which makes this brush says publicly: ¹

Weco Products yield the wholesaler the largest percentage of profit on any products of their type. Dr. West's Tooth Brush sells at the highest price of any advertised toothbrush, yet sells in larger volume than any advertised toothbrush and earns the largest profit.

No doubt many people buy an expensive brush because of the advertising promises. But I am sure that many pay the extra money because the package or the brush is a pretty color or matches the bathroom trimmings. You can't stop a woman who wants a harmonious bathroom by trying to save her a quarter. Anyway, why should you?

And now let us look at the pretty pink and blue balloons of the beauty business. It has been exposed over and over again. But what good did that do? The books and the articles didn't make a dent in the sales. In 1926 I wrote a pretty complete story of the inflated prices and ridiculous

¹ *Consumers Union Reports*, May, 1936.

promises of face creams, rouges, powders, and astringents. My friends thought it was a "wonderful" chapter, but kept right on paying for Arden and Rubinstein. James W. Young, Professor of Advertising, School of Business, at the University of Chicago, is right, though somewhat lush, when he says, "In a jar of face cream the advertiser may pack a dream of youth more priceless to some than the rarest unguents of the Orient."

Ridicule has left these dreams untouched:

A credulous lady of Utica'll
Believe any ad pharmaceutical,
Though a little unmanned
By removing her hand,
When she planned on removing her cuticle.
(Morris Bishop in *The New Yorker*.)

But before the man of the family can wave these pages in the face of his wife, I hurry to say that men's belief in the magic of shaving soaps and creams is quite as naïve as anything that women can show. Colgate, Williams, Palmolive, all make an old-fashioned shaving soap which costs five cents and is as good as anything on the market. Men used to use it in cups for shaving, and many do so now. It is a good-looking round cake, and it does the work. But most men look for the unattainable in fancy tubes or in English shaving bowls. The tubes seem modern and the shaving bowl looks distinguished, and looking distinguished is worth a dollar to some men just as it is to some women.

But neatness and distinction work on only a few men. The appeals that do the trick are success, speed, and sex—like the girl in the New York subway cards who says, "I could go for you, old fellow, if you had a Barbasol face."

Sometimes advertisers go off the track, but if different

brands of a product all use the same line of argument, you can assume it's an appeal that sells goods. Advertisers are copycats. They all watch each other. If one advertiser does well with a line of talk, the others follow right along as fast as they can. It's obvious from the ads that you can convince a man that a tube of shaving cream holds a better job, a bigger contract, or a prettier girl. And it's mere child's play to make him believe that he'll save ten seconds in his morning shaving by changing over to a new kind of soap or cream.

Men probably waste more money on face lotions than women do. Most preparations of after-shaving lotions are merely alcohol and water with coloring matter and perfume. They cost about two cents a bottle to make and sell for 25 to 50 cents. Still they are pleasant to use, even though they do no good. But witch hazel and bay rum are also pleasant to use and cost much less.¹

And it is men who are the buyers of hair tonics—men shown with their arms around a pretty girl in the *Saturday Evening Post*. Men respond to talk of success, speed, and sex. Sex and success, without the speed, are the tunes on which the women's cosmetic advertisers play—only success here means merely, "Get your man."

What exactly does the woman expect to find in her jars and bottles? What are the simple little facts that hold all these cosmetic balloons to earth? What does the woman want? She wants her skin to look clean, fine, young, and pretty. One of these cosmetics may do for her. They can keep her skin clean. They cannot make it fresh, they cannot make it fine, and they cannot make it young. As for cleanli-

¹ Consumers Union Reports, Jan.-Feb., 1937.

ness—here is something odd. With all the fortunes spent, nobody has found a new way of keeping the skin clean. Soap and water, vaseline, olive oil, mutton fat, or almond oil—those are the old ways, and they are still good.

It sounds fantastic, but it is really true that one reason women use so many cleansing cosmetics is that hardly any of them know how to wash their faces with soap and water. There's a little oil in the skin. The ordinary application of soapsuds emulsifies the oil. To get the dirt off you may have to use a second application of soap and water. And not with the hands, but with a face cloth or brush. If a woman has a dry skin with a tendency to chap, she can wash her face first with lanolin or Albolene, and follow that with soap and water or plain water; or she can use vegetable oils, but these aren't quite so good. Albolene is made of the lighter constituents of vaseline, costs much more, but is pleasanter to use; an excellent dirt remover, better for cleaning than vegetable oils, but certainly has no other effect. Lanolin is an animal fat obtained from the wool-fat of sheep. Perhaps that is where the foolish superstition arose that it grew hair. Lanolin is easily absorbed through the outer skin and so helps dry skins. But just for that reason lanolin creams have to be followed by washing with soap and water. Stage people use it for removing make-up. You can buy all the creams in all the ads and get nothing better. Lanolin is rather heavy and women who prefer a thinner cream have to be satisfied with dilutions and fancy prices.

Women have known about olive oil and mutton fat for thousands of years; they've known about soap for hundreds. None of this is new. Then why does the woman of today spend from one to three dollars a jar for cold cream? Why is she afraid to use soap and water? Because she believes

what the advertiser tells her. And why does she believe him? Partly because she wants to, and partly because the advertiser is backed up by the editorial pages of her special magazines and by her newspaper. Also, she isn't altogether a fool when she thinks that what worked for her mother won't work for her. It is harder to keep your face clean today than it was fifty years ago. There is more smoke in the air; there is more dirt. Besides, many of us had mothers who did physical work that kept their complexions clear with sweat. Women today work as hard, but less of them at sweat-making labor. So most women will tell you that what helped their mothers wouldn't be of any use to them. It isn't true. But you can't wonder that they think it is.

Besides, women have the delusion that blackheads are due to dirt. A blackhead is a plug of gland secretion. The black spot on top is dirt. But that's all. The rest comes from internal secretions, especially of the sex and thyroid glands. All the elaborate ritual offered by the cosmetic manufacturers for the removal of blackheads is nonsense. Astringents are no help. A jar or tube of zinc ointment from any druggist will do the trick better.

The first woman who put over the high-priced cosmetic business was named Adair. She had a new idea. In her beauty parlor in New York girls gave facial massage treatments. There was little or no profit in the treatments. Many of them were done at a loss. The profit came from the sale of products and the customer who didn't buy any was unwelcome. Her creams and lotions grew into a long line of products. She was, as far as I know, the one who first thought of taking five cents' worth of cream, putting it into a ten-cent package, and charging three dollars. No fancy jars for her. The jar was the kind you get in a drugstore

when a doctor orders a salve. Instead of the elaborate jars of her competitors, she used this antiseptic package—and saved a little money by the way. The jars looked like the best hospital stuff, plus a pretty bit of color. And her bottles were no fancy perfume affairs but the plain drugstore bottle with a nice label and a touch of colored ribbon.

One of the girls who worked for Adair left and started on her own as Elizabeth Arden. Adair has long vanished, but Arden has grown to huge size with “salons”—not “beauty parlors”—in New York, London, Paris, and goodness knows where else. Her packages are charming, her “salons” are decorated by the best decorators, everything is crisp and fresh and pleasant. The perfumes of all her products are carefully selected after weeks and sometimes months of work.

On high-priced cosmetics it is often more difficult to select the perfume than the product itself. I know that when we worked on Primrose House we sometimes fussed with hundreds of combinations before we got the right perfume. As for the chemical basis of our creams, that was simple enough. First we bought them from Larimore, the old drug firm which makes an excellent line and sells them at reasonable prices in its own drugstores. We bought them and put them into hospitalized packages with pretty labels and charged four times as much as Larimore’s did in its own store. Other sellers of high-priced cosmetics often do the same thing. But, except when they run short of stock, the larger ones make their own creams.

A few years ago the *New Yorker* had an acid but not unkind profile of Elizabeth Arden in its usual impersonal style. I am told that Miss Arden was so annoyed by this sketch that she canceled her advertising over the telephone

and stayed out of the magazine for some time. But she came back again. The woman who reads the *New Yorker* is the perfect customer for anything so expensive, so pretty, so apparently sophisticated, and so nonsensical. For some reason the *New Yorker* profile on Rubinstein was much kinder, yet Rubinstein used the same general scheme as Arden. So did a number of others—Dorothy Gray, Primrose House, Rose Laird.¹

Then along came special advertisers who had no “salons,” but who merely advertised one or two creams, like the current one called Endocrème. This one violates one of the basic ideas of the high-priced cosmetic business by using a fancy jar for its simple product. But the jar is not nearly as fancy as the advertising. It seems that this cream contains a “vital, active substance known in the clinical world as es-tra-diol.” Now this is really naughty. Es-tra-diol is one of the numerous trade names under which the sex hormones reach the market. This designation is derived from estrus, which means “readiness of the female for copulation.” And the chemical journals are full of ads reading: “Injection of this hormone will get this animal in estrus,” which means in simple, non-chemical, everyday language, will get the female in heat. Dear me! Is that what they plan to do by rubbing Endocrème on the skin of these pretty girls?

But Endocrème isn't the only one using hormones. Ru-

¹ They aren't exactly the same. Says the *New Yorker*: “Helena Rubinstein, we hear, has been going around telling ladies that necks *must* be massaged down; otherwise you push in double chins and wrinkles. Elizabeth Arden, on the other hand, says massage 'em up if you don't want to look like a plucked hen. We are always delighted when a public controversy turns up requiring no firm editorial stand on our part. They're your necks, ladies. Just figure it out for yourselves.”

binstein has a hormone scalp food. Also—a cute touch—a “twin hormone” face cream, two jars to be used alternately.¹

Compare the scientific es-tra-diol with the simple-minded romances of even ten years ago. At that time there was a woman in New York who charged fantastic prices and did very well with something she called “Strawberry Cream.” Her story was that once a year she went to England to get fresh English strawberries and fresh English cream, so you got the fresh complexion of the English countrywoman out of her jars, but anywhere from twenty to forty weeks after they were originally fresh, if indeed they ever were. Pure poetry. Or perhaps not so pure, but poetry just the same. Bergdorf-Goodman offered a romantic cream in the spring of 1938. This one wasn't so specific, but was made of general fresh fruits and vegetables. They come and they go, these beauty quickies, and here and there one stays and grows fat. No, not fat! Such a word is not used in the cosmetic field. They grow rich.

Apart from their alluring promises, most of the high-priced creams are all right. They do well enough all that a cream can do. But they are not the best creams. Better are the old-fashioned homemade creams, made with olive oil or almond oil. Olive oil and almond oil cannot be used in a commercial cream because they grow rancid. Sesame oil does not turn rancid so readily and is good for the skin, but it is almost never used. Best are the lanolin creams.

Cold cream and cleansing cream are the same thing.

¹ A *Saturday Evening Post* cartoon shows a girl thrusting at a saleswoman a half-empty bottle of “L'Amour Perfume—A Truly Enslaving Fragrance.” Behind her bow and crawl an assorted number of men. “You'll have to take it back,” she's saying, “I'm frightened.”

Cold creams may be simple mixtures of solid and liquid paraffin. Paraffin oil (the Russian oil people take for constipation) is a mineral oil and does not turn rancid. Aside from cleansing, paraffin oil has no beneficial effect whatsoever. The better creams contain sodium stearate, which gives the solid white appearance and fine smooth consistency. It also helps the manufacturer to introduce a considerable quantity of water. Sometimes there is also a little beeswax.

Lanolin, while it is best for the skin, is rarely used as a base for creams because its odor is not particularly agreeable. It isn't unpleasant, but most women would rather use something that has a perfume. Why not, if they're willing to pay for it? Also, lanolin has a creamy yellow tinge instead of the snow white which most women senselessly demand.

Many of the commercial creams, even the most expensive ones, are made with a product called olive oil foots, a sort of residue left over after the oil is taken off. These foots contain a much higher percentage of sulphur than olive oil itself, and sulphur may cause toxic symptoms in susceptible people, but in the making of creams is usually neutralized by some other ingredient.

A few women who buy expensive cosmetics know that they are no better than those they can get for ten or twenty cents. But they're busy proving that Veblen is right. They have these rows of jars and bottles on their tables to show that they have the money to pay for them. If a woman spends three dollars for a jar of cream, or one-and-a-half dollars for a lotion, just to show she can afford it, that's her business. Why try to protect her? She gets three dollars' worth of satisfaction out of it. "I'm the queen of Samo-

thrace; God, making roses, made my face"—with the help of Arden or Rubinstein.

But most cold cream money spent by advertisers and by the customer is not on high-priced preparations, but on those whose prices are reasonable enough. In quality most of the cheaper creams are good enough, though they have the same defects as the luxury creams. As with dentifrices, the manufacturer of a thirty-cent jar of cream allows ten cents for the finished product—cream and overhead—ten cents for profit, and ten cents for advertising. In foolish boasts and lying advertising, the cheap creams are every bit as bad as the dear ones. They, too, are using "modern science." Here is Pond's (*Good Housekeeping* guarantees every word of it) mixing vitamin A with its cream:

Pond's tested this "skin-vitamin" in Pond's Creams for over 3 years. In animal tests, skin became rough, old-looking when the diet was lacking in "skin-vitamin." But when Pond's "skin-vitamin" Cold Cream was applied daily, it became smooth, supple again—in 3 weeks! Then women used the new Pond's Cold Cream with "skin-vitamin" in it. In 4 weeks they reported pores looking finer, skin smoother, richer-looking.

All of this is so absurd that I hardly know where to begin on it. The "skin-vitamin" isn't A but G, known as the anti-pellagra factor and it's taken internally. Hardly a pretty picture of an animal with its fur all smeared with cream. Or did those animals which Pond's tested eat their skin-vitamins. Are women supposed to lick up Pond's cream? Wouldn't food that produces vitamin A or G taste better?

But Pond's isn't the only one with a vitamin in it. Here in a frenzy comes Woodbury's with a facial cocktail. The

facial cocktail contains vitamin D. Doctors had better wake up. They haven't yet found out that vitamin D "helps" the skin. The poor things still believe that vitamin D is the calcium vitamin. They give it to children to fight rickets—for bone formation. What effect does Pond's think an anti-rachitic vitamin can have on the skin? There is a way of arriving at it perhaps, though a bit roundabout. Ergosterol, which is the forerunner of vitamin D, if exposed to ultraviolet rays, will perhaps form some vitamin D. Even then it won't help the skin. So I suppose if you smear on enough Woodbury's cream and sit in the sun, you may get stronger bones if you want them. You may and you may not.

Vitamin talk has been a failure in food advertising. Can it possibly get over on cosmetics? Women are more foolish when they're buying cosmetics than when they're buying food. Still, I think this feeble little brain-wave will soon pass away.

Painters say that a shiny nose is more beautiful than a powdered one, that it gives a highlight which the face needs. But the painter here is a lonely man. On face powders the price business is plain silly. Most powders are all right, though those containing orrisroot or lycopodium seeds may do some harm. Cheaper powders, especially dusting and bath powders, often contain talcum, and talcum dries the skin. Consumers Union says that Pond's, Djer-Kiss, and Rubinstein aren't as good as the others, but that face powders do not cause "the cosmetic skin" which Lux Soap is so eager to cure. But its prices are crazy. The state of Maine published these figures and I pass them on to you with pleasure.

Brand	Cost		Selling Price
	Ingredients	Container	
Coty	\$.07	\$.05	\$.75
Elizabeth Arden .....	.23	.16	3.00
Harriet Hubbard Ayer..	.04	.03	.60
Daggett & Ramsdell ....	.05	.05	.85
Helena Rubinstein .....	.04	.06	1.00
Luzier's .....	.03	.05	1.00

Some of these, if sold by the pound at the same rate, would cost forty dollars a pound. And each one of them will do just exactly what any of the others will do. None of them can do anything special. Some have better perfumes; some have prettier packages; some promise you more in their ads than the others; some specialize in delicate nuances of color. All this is good advertising material and nothing else. It has no real value.

On astringents the beauty people go really quite mad. The astringent is the bottle of eternal youth, it takes out wrinkles, it "lifts" your face. If De Soto had only read our modern cosmetic advertising he never would have started out on the search for eternal youth that landed him strangely in Florida. He would have piled his dressing-table with bottles and bits of cotton and stayed comfortably at home dabbing his face with perfumed alum water. Many a three-dollar bottle of astringent is made up of five cents' worth of alum, a half-pint of water, and a little perfume. You can go to the drugstore yourself and get a fifth of an ounce of alum and dissolve it in a pint of water. There, except for the perfume, is your three-dollar astringent. Besides, if you use alum and water you know what you've got, and many an astringent you buy is dangerous. Not all of them. Most are safe enough. But why take the risk of getting carbolic acid in your perfumed cosmetic? Why, in-

deed! Because you believe the poetic words of the advertiser and like his pretty packages. How is a woman to know that the astringent or "skin freshener" is so simple a business? It feels stimulating, and the perfume is so agreeable that it is easy to believe that it's doing something special for you. The alum and water would have no perfume; it would have none of the persuasive power of clean, well-set, beautifully illustrated ads. And it wouldn't carry behind it the push of the editors who write so daintily for women. No drugstore is going to offer you eternal youth in five cents' worth of alum.

It is odd but understandable that no woman's magazine, no woman's page of a newspaper ever contains a word about alum and water, any more than it does about lanoline or olive oil or sesame oil, or about the old-fashioned peasant way of stimulating the skin with the white of an egg. This is really a face mask. One egg is enough for three applications, but if you'd rather, you can buy a face mask in a jar for five dollars, and thousands of women do so. Other thousands have the face mask applied in a beauty parlor, paying anywhere from one to ten dollars a time. Yet the white of egg is the best face mask that has ever been known. All you do is wash your face with soap and water, no cream. Then spread the white of an egg gently. Leave it on for twenty minutes or more—or all night—and wash it off with warm water. When the egg comes off you will look red and sunburned and your face will smart. This is as it should be. The mask brings the blood to the surface, which is good for you. The red wears off, but for a while you'll look as though you'd had a good long walk out of doors. There is no face mask on the market containing white of egg. The

cosmetic people tell you it can't be manufactured into a salable cosmetic. Naturally no magazine that is making money from cosmetic manufacturers is going to tell you about the white of an egg.

But the woman who pays five dollars for her face mask is not so pitiable as are all the poor creatures who fall for the hair dyes—poor in two ways, because no hair dye is becoming and, except for the vegetable dyes, none is safe. But their need is great. They think they're losing their youth, and they think they can't get along without it. Or—and this is worse—they're losing their jobs, and they know they can't get along without them. Desperate, they are willing to take a chance on a skin disease or even lead poisoning and to pay out such money as they can.

Everything that has been said here about other products applies also to soap. The good 5-cent cakes of soap are often made by the same companies which make more expensive brands, but they do not advertise the cheap ones. It seems possible that the government may insist that soap should be sold only as a cleanser and not for the purpose of removing wrinkles or bringing back a schoolgirl complexion. Mr. McIntyre, who is quoted earlier in this chapter, doesn't think this is fair. He says sarcastically, "It is very weak-kneed and contemptibly sentimental for the consumer to buy such a product in order to become beautiful." But, Mr. McIntyre, it will not make her beautiful. Still, maybe he's right—she thinks it will, and that's what she is paying for. J. D. Adams, ad-man, thinks that "Advertising is full of quaint, delightful illusion and dramatization. The public loves it, and is not deceived." That is a comfortable notion for an advertising man to live with. But it isn't so. The public is deceived and it does not love it or even like it.

But if a middle-aged woman doesn't break down in laughter when she is offered a schoolgirl complexion, if she can listen to the offensive syrup of Lady Esther on the radio without disgust, and if she can believe in a "Vita-Ray Vitamin Cream," if she'd like to think that her lips would be "forever beautiful" or that she can speed up "skin breathing," then of course she's got to pay.

But suppose a woman is intelligent. Suppose her taste is good. Can she believe the advertising? No. Can she believe her favorite magazine? No. Can she believe the girl behind the counter? No. In all cosmetic departments girls are paid by various manufacturers of cosmetics and perfumes. Some big department stores do not pay such girls a penny. Their entire wages come from the manufacturer. If a girl is paid by Coty, do you think she is going to recommend Dorothy Gray? Can the customer believe her magazines? *Good Housekeeping* (February, 1938) says:

The Good Housekeeping Beauty Clinic always makes doubly sure about anything that touches your skin. Hand lotions and creams, for example. . . . They must be proved *chemically pure* in scientific tests in our laboratories. . . . In other words no lotion or cream is acceptable to *Good Housekeeping* unless it is good in itself and good for your hands.

Naturally, the woman thinks this means something. It sounds fine. The assorted guarantees of *Good Housekeeping*, its Institute, its Bureau, and its Seal of Approval, may be pure nonsense.¹

Before me I have a copy of *Good Housekeeping* that editorially suggests the use of "tissue cream" for dry skins. This word *tissue* has no meaning. It is just a word that was

¹ See Chapter *Free Space*.

thought up originally either by Arden or Primrose House as a nice excuse for another cream to add to the line. The implication was that the cream went through both layers of skin to the tissues underneath. One thing you can bear in mind in reading all cosmetic advertising. No cosmetic penetrates to nourish the underlying tissues—none whatsoever.

Of Rubinstein's preparations, sealed with approval by *Good Housekeeping*, the Federal Trade Commission says (*Health & Hygiene*, Dec. 1936):

The FTC does not believe that any of these preparations "feed or nourish the skin or lips, restore youth to the skin, prevent crow's feet and wrinkles, and contain hormones or living sparks of life."

Ambrosia is one of the products guaranteed by *Good Housekeeping*. According to the New Hampshire State Department of Health, Ambrosia contained carbolic acid, which is rather better for cleaning floors than for cleaning faces. (*Health & Hygiene*, Sept. 1936.)

And here in *Good Housekeeping* (and plenty of other magazines) is Phillips' Milk of Magnesia Cream, asking,

Does your skin seem "Acid"? Here's a wonderful new way to help it! You know how Milk of Magnesia acts to relieve an *internal* condition of excess gastric acidity. Just so these unique Milk of Magnesia creams act on the *external* excess fatty acid accumulations on the skin. . . .

This peculiar paragraph is one mass of confused misinformation. Milk of magnesia does not always relieve excess gastric acidity. But even if all this were true and correct, what in the name of science is an acid skin? If any skin had too much fatty acid, it would merely mean that the

gal was unbelievably economical of soap and water or cleansing cream, in other words, plain dirty.

The Federal Trade Commission has made things a little uncomfortable for cosmetic advertisers in some ways, but has helped them in others. The manufacturers could no longer say this or that because it would annoy the competitors. The bewildered copy writer was at a loss. She (cosmetics advertising is all written by women) floundered about until *Drug Topics*, the chief trade publication in the field, published a booklet called "Dangerous Words," by Dr. F. J. Cullen, medical adviser to the Proprietary Association. He has told copy writers what they could say and what they could not. They've got to stop saying: "Doctors recommend"—"Dentists recommend"—"Nurses recommend." If a doctor recommends, you've got to say which doctor. You can't say "whitens teeth." Teeth come in various shades. He says that you can give teeth a brighter color or bring back their normal color. All right, but apparently you can say other things that are just as false, and the shrewd copy writer knows how to take the restrictions of the Federal Trade Commission and turn them to advantage. She makes her promises more precise, but not more honest.

Daggett & Ramsdell found the Federal Trade Commission an even more active help. They had gone straight to Eldorado for their copy story. Their cream is supposed to contain a colloidal gold. And that, if you please, makes it better than all the other creams. Certainly the Federal Trade Commission seems to think so because—well, here's the story taken from a speech by Caroline O'Day, member of Congress from the state of New York. In it she quoted the following from an article by Paul Ward in the *Nation*.

It is so well-written and so amusing that you will forgive me for a rather long extract: ¹

On the morning of May 28, 1936, virtually all the top chemists and physiologists in the Government departments were invited to a meeting sponsored by the Special Board of Investigation, there to hear a Dr. F. S. Macy lecture on colloidal chemistry. It turned out to be a lecture on the wonderful properties of colloidal gold when used in face creams.

I am assured by some of the scientists who attended that Dr. Macy was able to tell them a great many things about colloidal chemistry that they did not know—and do not know today.

It seems, according to a transcript of Dr. Macy's address, that colloidal gold has a remarkable relationship to feminine beauty; its molecules burrow right down into the skin and dig and dig. They dig up all the dirt under the skin and deposit it on the surface where it can be wiped right off. But before hoisting a bit of dirt up to the epidermis they carefully wipe all the little germs off it.

Dr. Macy didn't put it quite that way, of course; he said colloidal gold had no "germicidal" effect. He was quite careful about it, too. If it had a germicidal effect, or claimed to have, the cold creams containing it might be subject to regulation by the Food and Drug Administration. Dr. Macy's clients preferred to stay with their hosts, the Special Board of Investigation, whose chief, Mr. Adams, gave the doctor an effusive introduction, in the course of which he not only said that Dr. Macy "is reported to be better acquainted with the subject of colloids in medicine than anyone else in this country," but that Dr. Macy had "anticipated the discovery of insulin by about 3 years." The Mr. Adams who uttered these phrases is the gent, dear public, whom the Federal Trade Commission placed in charge of passing on the scientific claims of nostrum makers.

¹ Pure Food and Drug Bills, Remarks of Hon. Caroline O'Day of New York in the House of Representatives, Thursday, June 24, 1937.

To that I'd like to add just one remark. You can't add colloidal gold to a cream without making it pink, red, or blue. The beautiful red in stained glass windows is due to colloidal gold. Daggett & Ramsdell's cream is snow-white. It is an old-fashioned cream with an excellent reputation, but I suppose they were beaten by the better romancers, and they had to do something about it.

But even if the Federal Trade Commission were the watchdog that the innocent consumer thinks it is, how are they going to regulate the indirect implications of advertising? What government board can handle the combination of bad taste and goo that I heard over the radio the other day? It was the end of a program; I got only a few words. A holy sort of voice gurgled, "Remember that the Great Book said, 'Suffer little children to come unto me,'" then a sudden change of tone to back-slapping jollity—"All right, take it, Jerry," and an instant later Jerry cut in, "Start the New Year right with Fitch's Dandruff Remover Shampoo."

16. A GLASS OF WHAT, GEORGE?

LIQUOR advertising is now the most honest and decent in the United States. You don't see a woman or a child in an American liquor advertisement, nor a scene of revelry. And you'll not see Santa Claus or an aviator or a hero or an athlete. Why not? Because the federal government won't allow it, and some state governments allow even less. The censorship isn't clear; some of it is done by law, some by consent. And most of the distillers accept it with gratitude. You'll hear little rebellion from them. Here and there a distiller complains that he is hounded by the federal censorship, but most of them are hounded by something much worse—the fear that Prohibition is on the way back. They'd like it if no one noticed them or thought of them except to ask for a bottle or a glass of something. They would keep as quiet as mice if they could. But how can you act like a mouse and yet make the consumer ask for your special brand? So they shout in a strangled whisper.

If you are like everybody else I know, you think that liquor is here to stay and that Prohibition was something that was put over "while the Boys were away at war." The liquor interests know more about it than you do or I do, and they believe that the Prohibition movement is alive and kicking at the underpinnings of their business. The W.C.T.U. is working with energy and intelligence. The churches are active. They are angered by large things like the size of the liquor advertising, and by smaller things like

the use of Santa Claus, and of such Biblical quotations as, "It is more blessed to give than to receive." Non-drinkers dislike to see women drinking, and they grow violent at the sight of women at a bar. Oddly, often even men who drink object to women in a barroom. The reasons for this lie in the field of Freudian psychology and have no place in this book.

The distillers do not all believe that Prohibition was "put over" on them. Some think that they helped Prohibition along by their own misconduct and stupidity. But the old pre-war anti-arguments are going about again. Active Antis say that liquor and machinery do not mix. Again big employers are annoyed because so many men and even women don't come to work on Monday morning. Road safety people are worried about drunken driving.

All this goes on steadily. The liquor people are desperately worried. Even more worried are the banks. They hold first mortgages on the distillers' bonded stocks, and have become directors and executives in the liquor companies. Some are afraid that complete Prohibition may come again and that this time it will have teeth in it. Some of them think this unlikely, but are afraid of a rise in state control. There are now sixteen states in which packaged liquor can be sold only in state-owned stores. The industry thinks this number may go up.

Because of these fears the distillers are trying to keep the advertising clean and mild. But though the industry as a whole is anxious to be good, individual advertisers often slip out from under. They slip out because when they obey the spirit of the rules, it's hard to make the customer ask for a special brand.

American whiskeys are rye or bourbon (corn). Rye is dis-

tilled from rye, corn and malt, with a minimum 51 per cent of rye. In bourbon the 51 per cent minimum has to be corn, and there may be also rye and malt. It is sometimes hard for the drinker to tell the difference between the two. If the whiskey is less than two years old, the bourbon is apt to be smoother and to taste better than the rye. When the Wets came back, little good American liquor was to be found, so the bonded whiskeys are scarce and expensive. But no whiskey can be bottled, according to law, until it is a year old. Unless you are buying bootleg stuff, your bottle of whiskey is at least a year old.

Bonded whiskey is natural whiskey which has been matured under bond. This doesn't mean that it is a fine whiskey, even though it carries the green government stamp. "Bonded" merely means that the whiskey is at least four years old and that nothing has been added except distilled water to reduce it to a "hundredproof." 100-proof means that it contains 50 per cent of alcohol. The highest possible amount of alcohol is 95 per cent—5 per cent of the water cannot be eliminated. Then why not say simply 95 per cent alcohol instead of 190 proof?

Since Canada had no Prohibition period, Canadian whiskeys are practically all bonded. No whiskey can be bottled in Canada until it is two years old.

Before Prohibition, blended whiskeys outsold bonded whiskey. Most people preferred them. They are cheaper than bonded whiskeys, and many people like them better because they are lighter in taste. The notion that blended whiskeys are not so good in quality as straight bonded whiskeys is an empty one that has floated around since 1933. Their quality and taste depend entirely upon the age of the original whiskey.

Whiskey doesn't keep on getting better with age. American whiskeys are best when they are about six or seven years old. After that they are inclined to deteriorate.

At the present moment, 10 per cent of the whiskey sold in America is in blends rather than bonded or straight whiskey. The balance is bonded. But distillers think that when things settle down the country will go back to pre-war percentages, when 70 per cent of the total was composed of blends.

Scotch whiskey is made from malted barley and wheat and is ripened in sherry casks, while American whiskeys are ripened in charred oak kegs. Most Scotch whiskeys are blends. Scotch whiskeys do not deteriorate with age as rapidly as American. They do not show deterioration until they are about twenty years old.

The age, the alcoholic content, and the type of whiskey are stated on the bottle. Federal regulations for liquor labeling are severe and strictly enforced. Besides, the package store is inspected several times during the year by the Alcohol Tax Unit of the Treasury Department and so no responsible retailer would risk selling spurious liquors. So, when you buy a bottle of liquor you know what you're getting, that is, if you care.

But if you order a drink at a bar or in a restaurant, what do you get? Who knows? If you pay 35 cents for a high-ball, you may get a better one than if you pay 25 cents. But also you may not. Every bartender is paid by some distiller to push a brand. The headwaiter or food buyer of the hotel is bribed to do the same; the owner of the bar or hotel or restaurant gets rebates. This holds good of the finest hotel in your city just as much as it does for the cheap little corner saloon. Go to any fashionable bar you like; look at the

half-dozen men in crisp white coats skillfully shaking them up. You can be sure that each of them is being paid by some distiller. The bartender gets \$35 a week union scale, but hotel and club wages range from \$60 a month up. The men employed in hotels and clubs are the poorest paid of the bartenders. Wages sometimes go up above the scale. Very rarely a man gets \$60 a week. The bartender's pay isn't enough to live on, but the owner expects him to get extras from the distillers.

The New York State Board of Liquor Control has in its anteroom a poster reading, "You cannot be on two pay-rolls." Well, maybe the bartender can't be, but he is. The owner knows which wholesaler is paying each bartender. Usually he gets a cut himself, in the form of a rebate. If there is a headwaiter, he gets his share too. It isn't a quantity discount, because that would be illegal under the Patman Act. It's just a gift. This is one of the many dodges which have made the Patman Act ridiculous. When a dealer orders 100 cases, the manufacturer ships him 125, or sometimes even 150, and says nothing about the extra amount in the bill.

The bartender is far more important in the liquor business than the salesman in most other retailing. The bartenders' union is strong. A quiet boycott on a liquor which is having union trouble is very effective. For a while Black and White had labor difficulties, and it was hard to get bartenders to serve it.

When they go to a bar, most Americans say, "Rye, Joe," or "Bourbon for me, Jack." If you do that you get what the bartender is paid to push toward you. Even if you specify a brand, you may find that this place doesn't carry it. You may get bourbon when you order rye, or the other way

around, and you probably won't know the difference. Mind you, he may give you a better rye than the one you asked for. The best American and Canadian whiskeys do as much bribing as the cheapest grades. But whether he gives you a worse drink or a better one, or whether he gives you poor whiskey or a good one, he may give you, not what you expect, but what he is paid to put over.

Bribing is really too strong a word, because the payment is a recognized custom of the industry. The same method is used in the cosmetic departments of big stores, but there it doesn't make much difference because the customer is in the habit of asking for cosmetics by brand names.

Not all distillers bother with bar sales. Some, like Four Roses, try to sell their goods along grocery lines, that is, to push the sale of bottled goods only.

None of the Scotch distillers bribe bartenders. That doesn't mean that you may not get a poor quality of Scotch. If you don't specify a brand of Scotch, you get what the boss makes the most money on.

The distiller is now trying to prove to the retailer that he can get a better price by pushing advertised liquors over the bar. Also he is trying to teach bartenders that they can charge more for mixed drinks when a well-known brand is used. But even if that works both the distiller and the customer are rather helpless in dealing with drinks by the glass.

Let's say you order a brand and the bartender shows you the label on the bottle. Then he pours your drink—maybe it's the Old Overholt of the label he's pouring out and maybe not. Once the bottle is opened it is easy enough to adulterate with water or with a cheaper whiskey. Only a good taster can judge quality in whiskey after it has been mixed with lemon peel or ginger ale, and after the second

round it takes an even better taster to judge a straight drink. But then after the second drink, nobody cares.

Bribes to owners of bars and bartenders are not limited to the sale of hard liquor. They are common on wine, especially on champagne, also on ginger ales and fizzy waters. Several years ago Cliquot Club tried to help along its advertising by getting itself into smart hotels. But they found that the hotels and their employees were heavily subsidized by other brands. At its lower price, Cliquot Club couldn't compete with a high-priced brand like C. & C.

In the sixteen states where bottled liquor is sold by the state, retailing is less trouble than in the other thirty-two states, but it is also less profitable. State liquor stores are always without adornment or displays. On the shelves stand the bottles, on the wall hangs a price list. The man behind the counter is not allowed to recommend a brand or to express an opinion. Getting your goods on sale here, getting your name on the wall list, is often a matter of bribing the state board or its subordinates. This is of course a much simpler procedure than fussing with thousands of retailers and bribing all the bartenders, but you also make less money. And there's always the danger that you may strike a board that you can't bribe.

Altogether the retail situation in the liquor industry is confused and peculiar. Many of the distributors are men who have been bootleggers. Perhaps because of their bootlegging they are more independent in their attitude toward the wholesaler than other retailers.

There are no retail liquor chains, but the individual retailers have bound themselves into strong associations which protect them against the distiller in the manner of trade unions. They use boycotts instead of strikes, but they have

one weapon which no trade union can use, and that is price-cutting. This is illegal, according to the Tydings-Miller bill and according to certain state bills, but these bills aren't working well. They were backed by banks holding liquor mortgages on bonded stocks because naturally such price-cutting ruins their equity. It seems possible that in spite of all these bills the dealer may wind up by selling bonded whiskey at a dollar a pint.

So the American distiller listens nervously to the retailer in planning his advertising. As a result his selection of mediums is apt to be scattered and illogical. The retailer says, "If you don't advertise in such and such a paper, I can't sell your goods," and hurriedly the distillers add another newspaper to the list. Besides, all through their business runs the idea inherited from their lean years, that you've got to buy protection. Much of the advertising in local newspapers is done to make friends for the liquor side in the fight with Drys. They want to show the locality that they are spending money right on the spot. They want to make the retailer and the local people happy, and if while they're doing it they can help along the sales, so much the better.

The Scotch whiskey people have been shrewder. Before Prohibition they sold 1 per cent of the whiskey in the United States. When Repeal came, they figured on the same percentage and they began to advertise with that figure in mind. They did only selective advertising, ignoring the dealers' clamor, and buying space only in a few of the better magazines and newspapers. They figured that if they sold the wealthiest or the most influential people, others would follow along. They have made Scotch the fashionable whiskey. The advertising has been dignified, but on the strength of this shrewd idea, instead of 1 per cent of whiskey in

America, they now sell 6 per cent. It is possible that this figure will drop in proportion as there are more matured American whiskeys.

The American distiller, though trying to satisfy the dealer, doesn't plan his advertising so sensibly or so carefully. \$75,000,000 has been spent on liquor advertising since Prohibition, and the figures keep mounting. 1937 was twice that of 1934.

Schenley is the biggest of the liquor advertisers. In 1936 they spent \$1,225,000; National Distillers, \$1,068,000; Hiram Walker, \$1,048,000; Seagram, \$896,000; Continental Distillers, \$778,000; Frankfort Distillers, \$774,000. And liquor appropriations are increasing. Among magazines the *New Yorker* leads the list in number of pages. If they took all that is offered, 40 per cent of the magazine would be liquor advertising, and the look of the magazine would be spoiled. They reject all above 15 per cent. Even so the *New Yorker* leads all the rest in the number of pages carried. After the *New Yorker* come *Esquire*, *Time*, *Life*, *Collier's*, *Cosmopolitan*, *Fortune*, *Stage*, *Redbook*, *American*, and so on down the list.

Time tried to get all the class magazines together to refuse liquor advertising, but that didn't work. The Curtis Publishing Company (the *Saturday Evening Post*, *Ladies' Home Journal*, *Farm Journal*) refuses liquor advertising of any kind. Two or three hundred newspapers won't take a line of it. Three or four hundred take wine and beer but reject the hard liquors. Many will take no liquor advertising on Sunday. Some of them are in smaller cities, but some are among the largest in the country. The Gannett string, which includes about ten papers, is fanatically dry.

The figures for wine, brandy, and liqueurs are small by comparison with whiskey, and the regulations are about the same. On beer, about one-fifth as much is spent as on hard liquor. Even though there are thirteen brands of beer advertised, few of them spend much money. There is only one beer, Pabst, with \$1,023,000, which comes near the liquor figures. Beer advertising is increasing slightly, but the brewers are putting a good deal of emphasis on indirect, unpaid-for publicity which you read in your magazines and newspapers as news. They too are worried about Prohibition and have been trying ever since liquor came back to cut themselves away in the public mind from the distillers.

The United Brewers, at a convention in Pittsburgh, got up a Code of Practice which they pledged themselves to follow, promising to promote moderation and sobriety, to eliminate "anti-social conditions wherever they may surround the sale of beer to the consumer," to prevent sales to minors or people who have drunk too much.

Brewers do plenty of bribing of bartenders, saloonkeepers and hotel owners. In their advertising, they rely largely on local media, newspapers, posters, local radio, car cards, and, where permitted, signs in retail stores and taverns.¹ A group called the United Brewers Industrial Foundation foolishly advertised beer as liquid bread, but had to stop, largely because other brewers very sensibly objected. A California brewery advertised its beer as a reducing diet. The Federal Alcohol Administration stopped that.

The \$75,000,000 spent has not done the job it should on the pushing of brands of hard liquor. The brand situation on whiskey seems to be getting worse. *Liquor Store and*

¹ *Editor & Publisher*, Dec. 4, 1937.

Dispenser, a trade magazine, had a survey made.¹ It showed that in spite of the \$75,000,000 only 43 people out of 100 specify brand when they order liquor. And that's the big worry of the liquor industry now. Here's the way it worked:

	Brand specified by
On straight drinks across a bar	48%
On mixed drinks across a bar	22%
On bottled goods	58%

So you can see what the advertiser of liquor faces. He has got to behave well so that Prohibition won't come back, but he has got to make the consumer ask for his brand. Because of the censors he can't swing around freely among fine- and mighty-sounding words, nor can he make such generous promises. The three monitors who watch over liquor copy—the F.A.A., the distillers, and the state liquor control boards—work well together. But they do not have the same rules. Some states are stricter than others, and they would be even more so if it weren't for Interstate Commerce Regulations under which they can't shut out magazines carrying liquor ads. Most important, of course, is the Federal Alcohol Administration. There is considerable confusion, but out of it a working practice has been figured out. Take radio, for example.

Neither the Federal Alcohol Administration Act nor the regulations issued thereunder prohibit the advertising of alcoholic beverages by means of radio broadcasts. However, this Administration has urged the discontinuance of the advertising of distilled spirits by means of radio broadcasts as matter of

¹ Includes Scotch and soda, bourbon and soda, rye and soda or ginger ale. Authority, Ross Federal Research Corporation Survey, May, 1937.

sound public policy from the standpoint of the distilling industry.—[F.A.A. letter 4/24/38.]

Captain Wilford S. Alexander, head of the Federal Alcohol Administration, recently suggested that Congress should prohibit all liquor advertising over the radio. But up to now no such regulation has been passed. However, the distillers themselves have an agreement not to use the radio. The National Distillers Association says that many children listen to radio programs and they think it unwise to force themselves on such an audience. In short—you can't get a liquor program on the radio, though there's no law against it. The radio networks won't take it.

According to the Federal Alcohol Administration, no advertisement of liquor can contain any statement that is false or misleading in any particular, no statement that is disparaging to a competitor's products, no statement or representation that is obscene or indecent, no claim for curative or therapeutic effect. No seals, flags, and coats of arms, crests or other insignia, no living men in U. S. uniforms. No picture of a woman or child or a festive party.

National Distillers, a corporation which makes several brands, would go further.¹ They would bar advertising in college dailies, college comic periodicals, or college athletic programs. They would stop advertising in Sunday newspapers and in religious publications. They would bar all liquor advertising over the radio, illustrations of drinking at bars, of convivial night club scenes, drinking at picnics or at bathing beaches. They would show no advertising with Santa Claus, Easter rabbits, cherry trees, or other such symbols. They would not imply that aviators or ships' pilots

¹ At conference of state liquor administrations, Providence, R. I., July, 1936.

use liquor, would show no ships' officers or seamen, locomotive engineers or crew men. They would bar such slogans as "Not a headache in a hogshead," or "Older men know, younger men are learning."

Many of these regulations, both of the F.A.A. and the distillers, are backed and enforced severely by state boards. But some of the state regulations are odd, to say the least. In Florida "a circular and card advertising that a 'Mystery Man' will give a silver dollar to persons approached when they recommend certain brands of beer, is not prohibited." That's nice, but in Illinois no persons licensed to sell alcoholic liquors shall use the words "saloon" or "bar" in any sign or advertisement. In Massachusetts no licensed hotel, restaurant, or club can call itself a tavern, while no licensed tavern can call itself a restaurant, hotel, or club. In Michigan the liquor advertising cannot refer to any deceased ex-President of the United States. In New Hampshire and Oregon they cannot tie copy to holidays. In New Jersey a club may use a golf score card which advertises a brand of whiskey, but "signs suggestive of intemperance, such as 'Get Lit at the Lighthouse,' are barred." In the state of Washington they cannot show "Father Time" or "Easter bunnies." In Idaho all billboard and window display advertising on liquor is prohibited.

In other states liquor can be advertised on billboards only if you use a painted sign, not if the sign is made of paper and pasted on. The reason is this: On pasted paper signs contracts are made to cover large territory, but on the painted sign the location of each billboard is designated in the contract. No liquor sign can be put up next to a school or a church. But if your sign is a pasted-up one, you don't know where it is going to be located.

All these regulations both within and without the industry make it hard to write copy which will induce the customer to ask for a special brand. You can say in an ad, "This soap will help to give you a clear complexion," even though it is a lie. You can say that "This oatmeal will help you reduce your weight," although such a statement is mere nonsense. But you cannot say that such and such a whiskey will pick you up, will make you stronger, will give you fun, will make a good party, will please your girl friend.

So why should the customer, who has been used to spending his money for fairy tales, ask for your brand? He lives in a world where, Stuart Chase says,¹

. . . the advertiser often creates verbal goods turning the reader's attention away from the product. He sells the package and especially the editorial matter around the package. Consumers often pay their money for the word rather than for the thing.

If you aren't allowed to sell the customer verbal goods—or words—you are stymied. So the liquor advertiser and the copy writer often try to slip in under the rope. And then along comes the F.A.A. with a special bulletin:

The Administration has noticed several recent advertisements of distilled spirits which state or imply that the products advertised will have a cooling or refreshing effect upon the consumer . . .

It is the Administration's opinion that any advertisement which creates the impression that the distilled spirits advertised will have a cooling or refreshing effect upon the consumer is misleading and in violation of Article VI, Section 64 (a) (1) of Regulations No. 5, relating to the labeling and advertising of distilled spirits. However, the Administration has not ob-

¹ *Tyranny of Words.*

jected to distilled spirits advertisements which state or imply that certain iced drinks, such as the "Tom Collins" or "Mint Julep," are cooling or refreshing, if it is made quite clear that the statement or implication applies to the mixed drink, rather than to the distilled spirits used in its preparation.

And as a result, in Calvert's summer ads you will see, "Let's stop off for a cooling Calvert Collins. There is nothing like this for a hot day."

When my husband was a boy he went to the State Military Academy of South Carolina known now as the Citadel. The regulations were so severe that army officers who came from this school were known as martinets. Everything a boy did or wore was supposed to be covered by some sort of rule. Apparently when my husband was there he spent most of his time in legalistic study of these rules to find some detail that was not covered. In his search he discovered that while a white straight collar was specified, nothing was said about the height of the collar. Soon he turned up in class with a collar that reached up to his ears. At retreat next evening a new regulation was read out that after that day collars would be between one and one and a half inches high.

Then he studied the regulations some more and saw that nothing was said about the color of socks. In chapel the next Sunday he appeared with glaring plaid showing beneath the trousers of his uniform. Monday morning there was another new regulation—socks were to be plain black. The regulations stayed, but before they went into effect he had managed to put something over.

Just so the liquor advertisers study the rules to see if they can't manage to put something over before the F.A.A.

can get into action with a new regulation. For violations a distiller can be fined not more than \$500 for each offense. It is worth while to pay \$500 to get a sensational ad across to the consumer. Of course, if the distiller did it often he would be in serious trouble. But sometimes these little tricks aren't actually violations. They manage to say a word or two before they call forth a new refinement of the rules from Washington. Calvert suggested that "Clear heads call for Calvert." Washington slammed down on such advertisements, the kind which

. . . create the impression that definite benefits would follow the use of their whiskeys . . . without any impairment of mental or physical faculties . . . wholesomeness of the advertised products; to the absence of hang-overs on mornings following drinking; improvements in appetite or digestion; to unaffected efficiency . . . other similar effects . . .

. . . consumption of distilled spirits will contribute to the mental or physical well-being of the consumer, or that spirits can be taken even in moderate quantities without any detrimental effects . . .

. . . the kind which claims health benefits, or which implies that no harmful results will follow the consumption of liquor, is by far the most objectionable. Appropriate action has, therefore, been taken to cause the prompt discontinuance of advertisements of this type. [March 17, 1937.]

And so now Calvert says, "Clear heads [and in lighter type] (clear-headed buyers) call for Calvert whiskeys." That is a small concession to make. The casual reader may see only "Clear heads" and overlook "clear-headed buyers."

Certainly the F.A.A. has been lenient and wishes if possible to help the liquor industry. It says:

It is the Administration's opinion that advertisements of this type may gradually develop opposition to the distilled

spirits industry against which the friends of freedom and moderation will be helpless. [June 22, 1936.]

Then a few more distillers try a trick or two, and the Federal Alcohol Administration has to slap them again. The Administration "has also noted a tendency . . . to use pictures or illustrations of athletes . . ."

It is believed that the use of pictures of athletes either actual or imaginary, in such connections, may create the impression that the products advertised are conducive to the development of athletic prowess, or that the persons pictured are endorsing such products. It is, accordingly, the Administration's opinion that the use of advertising copy of this nature is prohibited by the regulations. [June 28, 1937.]

The F.A.A. allows liquor to advertise itself as an "apéritif," or appetizer, if that means merely something appropriate "as an appetizer before meals or at the cocktail hour," or that "is especially suitable as an apéritif before dinner." But "it would be improper to state that any particular brand of distilled spirits, wine or malt beverages, or mixtures of the same, will 'stimulate the appetite,' or 'promote the flow of gastric juices,' or to make any other similar statement which tends to give the impression that the product has medicinal value. . . ." (Dec. 10, 1937.)

The distillers wonder why the government itself broke the rules in advertising Virgin Islands Rum. These ads showed an old captain teaching a young waiter how to mix "hot buttered rum, with plenty of gusto and atmosphere."

Another way to get around the regulations is to show your festivities, not in New York, but in Tierra del Fuego. Two natives of Tierra del Fuego hug each other with joy—and Schenley whiskey is right there in the headlines. And there's Guiana and Africa. One of the distillers had a good

deal about African villages until it turned out that the African village had been specially built on the Hudson.

You can't show scenes of jollity, but how about a scene of jollity in 1895, with a rancher in a 10-gallon hat riding in a taxicab and taking a tip about Hiram Walker from the jolly red-faced driver? And since you can't show people dancing, you show oysters dancing.

From all the finagling of the distillers, it is a pleasure to turn to a campaign of real social foresight. Seagram rose to a new high with copy that read:

WE DON'T WANT YOUR BREAD MONEY

No person should spend a cent for liquor until the necessities of living are provided—and paid for. Bills for groceries, clothes, rent, light, heat, doctors, have the first call on America's payroll.

We don't want to sell whiskey to anyone who buys it at a sacrifice of the necessities of life. Whiskey is a luxury and should be treated as such. Fine whiskey can play a pleasing part in the scheme of gracious living . . . but only when taken in moderation and only after the bills are paid.

This statement may seem contrary to our self-interest. Actually it is not. As one of America's leading distillers, we recognize a definite social responsibility. The very existence of legalized liquor in this country depends upon the civilized manner in which it is consumed. In the long run, we believe, it is good business for us to say "pay your bills first."

Also socially responsible is this one:

YOU'RE A HERO . . . TO YOUR SON

. . . Nothing is quite so disillusioning to the clear eyes of a youngster as the sight of a man—his own father—who has used liquor unwisely.

. . . Any man who cannot drink wisely and moderately, owes it to his son . . . his family, not to drink at all.

The coming generation will be less apt to use liquor intemperately if older people will regard it as a luxury and treat it as a contribution to gracious living—to be enjoyed in moderation.

But the most sensational of this series was the Seagram dangerous driving advertisement which you may remember—a dark night stabbed by the lights of a car going at full speed, and the bold headline, “We Who Sell Whiskey Say, Drinking and Driving Don’t Mix.” This was worth a lot in prestige to Seagram, but I doubt if it sold much liquor. And it had an unhappy kickback. Dealers and other liquor advertisers went into hysterics. “Look what you’re doing—giving the W.C.T.U. dope they can use to kill us!” And the W.C.T.U. certainly did use it—with enthusiasm.

This apologetic attitude toward a product has probably never been shown by any other advertiser in modern history. It reached a sort of apogee in the advertising of Jack Dempsey. That campaign seems to set out to stop all drinking. “Drink no whiskey if you are under 21,” pleads the ad. But there is a good deal about this Jack Dempsey whiskey story that is more seeming than real. While pleading with you not to drink, Mr. Dempsey is doing some energetic work which may undo some of the effect of his own pleas. There will be retailer meetings, luncheons, speeches. And the copy—far from explaining the evils of drinking—slips around the F.A.A. regulations thus:

My years spent as your host . . . have afforded me an opportunity to learn what the most exacting tastes prefer in whiskey . . . smooth yet manly, light and still full-bodied, a heavyweight in value and a lightweight in price. . . . I never in my life trained so much for any job as this one. . . .¹

¹ Tide, Mar. 1, 1938.

This would have been perfect with Mr. Dempsey in boxing outfit. But to that the F.A.A. said No.

But how about a nice miniature set of Golden Gloves tied around the bottle, just as White Horse Scotch uses a little white horse? Again the F.A.A. said No.

That sort of thing called forth a wail from Westbrook Pegler. He didn't see "why the industry is constantly depreciating itself in its advertisements." He would say: "Whiskey makes you feel good and makes you forget your worries." "Home without whiskey ain't no home to me," and "Reach for a bottle instead of a book." He would appeal to the youth of the land, knowing that his old customers, "dropping off day by day, would require replacements." How the whiskey people would love to follow Mr. Pegler's advice!

But while the Seagram temperance campaign was tops in putting liquor people in the right light to the public and in arousing discussion, the one that sold the most stuff has been on a much lower plane. Calvert's collection of animals seems plain silly, but it sells goods. The animal idea came as a sudden flash to an agency working on a campaign that had to be got up in a hurry. The agency discovered that there are 15,000,000 dog licenses in the United States. That means—the way advertisers like to figure—that there are 45,000,000 people in the cities who like dogs but can't own them. Add that to dog owners in the country—and you have 90,000,000 people. Practically everybody who would like to look at pictures of dogs and who would think that a good dog picture means a good whiskey. The campaign went like a fire in thirsty weeds. Other liquor people then thought this agency must be a wonder and several handed over their accounts. They were much

disappointed to find that nothing happened. Even though Four Roses shows you "a thousand dollars' worth" of puppies, and Old Quaker tells you that the reason it puts up such fine whiskey is that there are 51 watch dogs watching its manufacture, you can't use animals on all the liquor accounts. As it was the pages were getting a bit crowded with dogs, so Calvert's is going on with the rest of the zoo in a big way. You see jolly polar bears and you deduce the idea that Calvert's must be jolly too. The yaks are pretty good, but the gazelles are better, especially with their young. Gazelles are gay in the poem, but F.A.A. won't let you call them gay in a liquor ad. However, Calvert does what it can with this irrelevant verse:

Gazelles are famous for their haste
 (And Calvert's famous for its taste).
 Gazelles are skilled in graceful flight
 (And skill makes Calvert's blends just right).

This has really nothing to do with the whiskey, but it puts the reader in a pleasant mood. I myself am enchanted by the penguins in the advertising of Kools. You can be sure there is going to be a general zoological appearance to the liquor advertising pages for quite a while.¹

In brief then, the scene is one of great confusion. The dealers are independent, the bartenders demand a rake-off, the headwaiter wants his share, the owner of the restaurant or the bar wants a cut. The Federal Alcohol Administration and the State Boards are strict. So the arguments for individual brands have to be silly or pointless. The customer is really better off where retail selling is done by the state,

¹ Grown people do not respond well to ads with pictures of cats. The popular magazines do not like to use a cat on their covers. They claim that sales fall off. Nobody knows quite why this is.

even though that sometimes means that he has to drive ten or fifteen miles to the nearest liquor store.

The customer gets what he pays for when he buys his liquor by the bottle. Over the bar or at the table he doesn't know what he's getting. But often he'd rather give up the certainty of the bottle at home for the social drinking at the bar.

17. OBSOLESCENCE AND AUTOMOBILES

WHEN you pay \$750 for a car, only about \$67.50 goes for labor at the factory. The rest is materials, shipping, dealer's pay, overhead, and profit. Roughly, the part of your \$750 which can easily be traced breaks down like this—

Labor	\$ 67.50
Dealer	180.00
Freight	75.00 (average)
Advertising	75.00

On a more expensive car, the percentages are about the same except that the share for advertising is higher. Even on the low-priced car the advertising cost is actually greater than the cost of labor. This figure is for labor at the automobile factory only. The cost of labor in mining iron, making steel, glass, etc., is not included. The figures vary slightly from year to year and from place to place. They vary with the price of steel, the price of labor, the cost of management.

As you can gather from these figures, the dealer is of huge importance in the automotive set-up. This \$180 is only part of his share. Yet the dealer today is in a bad fix. The piling up of used cars, the falling away of business in 1937, the senseless raising of automobile prices, the autocratic stupidity of the manufacturers, all add up to plenty of trouble for the dealer.

Dealer conditions and arrangements are pretty much the

same with all the large companies. We'll take Chevrolet as an example. It has two classes of dealers: the direct representative and the associate. The direct representative is appointed by the company. The associate works in places too small to have a regular agency and is appointed by the direct dealer.

On the average car, the direct dealer gets 24 per cent commission, though some of the smaller manufacturers give more. Of this the associate gets about 15 per cent on cars which he sells. Also out of the 24 per cent 5 goes to the salesman; on a used car, 5 to 7 per cent. The general uniformity is only a few years old. Manufacturers used to give quantity discounts that ran as high as 21 per cent extra. And on the other side, Ford at one time cut his dealers' commission down to 17 per cent. They could not make money and Ford has had to go back to 24 per cent.

The business is conducted on the theory that every part of a motor sale ought to bring the retailer some profit. Thus there are all kinds of extras. Take freight. Perhaps your bill of sale says \$45 or \$95. But it seldom costs as much to ship a car as the amount specified on the bill. Freight charges are figured as though every car were shipped all complete in a freight car from the factory to your dealer. Few cars are so shipped. Cars finished at the central factory are usually driven over the roads to the point of delivery, which is cheaper than shipping by freight. Or the car is shipped in parts to the assembling point nearest to you. In parts you can get as many as thirty automobiles into one freight car, while assembled you can get only four. The cost of shipping is the same for thirty unassembled cars as for four finished cars. The profit on this is divided between the factory and the dealer. It is claimed that the saving in shipping cars to

assembly plants is partly offset by the extra cost of assembly in small or inefficient plants. But assembly plants are, as far as I know, always large enough to make this a specious argument.

The Automobile Manufacturers Association estimates that at most 61.2 per cent of cars were sold on installments in 1936. Dealers think that figure too low. Some dealers place their estimate as high as 90 to 95 per cent. On these time sales the dealer makes a little extra money. The General Motors Acceptance Corporation is organized to finance installment business.

Though the actual rate of interest on installment sales is 12 per cent, the big automobile finance corporations are lenient on delinquencies, and if a man gets hard up, are willing to refinance the part which he still owes, extending it over a longer period and cutting the payments in half. Sometimes if a man has been delinquent a couple of months, they will take his car and store it for thirty days and give it to him again when he starts paying. Naturally they don't want the car back.

On car accessories, radios, etc., the commission is 40 per cent. And there's the payment for service. The price of service is standardized by the manufacturer, who sets the prices at the factory for labor in repairing cars. These are lower in communities where rent is cheaper. The business of repairs is not all velvet. The dealer has to carry a huge stock of spare parts. Because of continual changes in design, new spare parts are made each year and various sets of spare parts for years back have to be carried in stock. Many of these will never be sold.

In assigning dealer territory, General Motors divides the country into seven regions, and these regions into zones.

For Chevrolet there are 54 zone offices. The zones are divided into districts, 8 to 15 dealers in each district. When a Chevrolet dealer opens his place, he has to have a capital of \$135 for each car which he is expected to sell. If the normal number sold in his section is 100 new cars a year, he must start with \$13,500 of capital in order to get his franchise.

The factory, basing its figures on previous sales, sets a minimum for each dealer. He contracts to sell from 100 to 600 cars, depending on his location. The number he contracts to sell does not depend on a guess or a hope, but on careful figuring. In each zone every car registration, no matter what the make, is reported to the zone manager. Meantime the factory has gathered statistics on the bank and business situation in the district. The dealer may fall behind because he has too many accounts out, or because his salesmen aren't good. Or he may fall behind because, as in 1938, the car is too high-priced and there are too many used cars, and, anyway, business is bad.

A dealer arouses the anger of the factory when he "creams the trade." When it is hard to sell new cars, dealers push their old cars at low prices and neglect the new ones. Naturally this is little help to the factory, and hence a waste of its advertising and plant. But what is the dealer to do in bad times with his used cars if he doesn't "cream the trade?"

There are few sales in which a used car is not turned in. Ford's Cameron said over the radio that two out of three cars now in use were used cars when purchased. Sweet to the dealer is the straight sale for cash without a turned-in used car. We once got a discount of \$400 on a \$2,100 car by buying it that way. And nowadays, I am told, it is always

possible to get a "cash" discount of \$100 to \$150 on a car selling for a thousand dollars or less. Usually a dealer who sells 200 new cars must sell from 200 to 500 used cars before realizing a profit. Sometimes he has to handle three or four used cars for one new car sale. He sells a 1938 and takes in a 1935 used car. When he sells the 1935 he takes in a 1933, and to get rid of that he takes in a 1931—all to sell one new car.

The factory doesn't like to put dealers out of business or to have them fail. It costs time and money to replace a dealer. The General Motors Holding Corporation was organized to pick up the dealer pieces. They close down on a man only as a last resort. A dealer's bankruptcy has a bad effect on the public. If a dealer goes broke, the holding corporation picks out a good salesman and sets him up in business, keeping him under close supervision until he is on his feet. The new dealer is allowed gradually to buy up the stock so that by the time he knows how to run his business, he owns it outright.

It would be hard to overestimate the importance of the dealer. To be successful, a man must not only be a salesman, in the face of heavy competition, but he has to be a local ambassador for the company. He must believe in "the future of this great country," believe that any and all "business recessions" are temporary, and be willing to back his belief with time, effort, and money.

If you have any complaint to make you make it to the dealer. If you feel that you have been overcharged or the car isn't up to what the advertising led you to expect, you go to the dealer. How many customers even think of writing a letter to Ford or Chrysler or Alfred P. Sloan? If you demand an adjustment, that too must be made by the dealer,

and usually out of his own pocket. One customer means a great deal to one dealer, but he means very little to the factory that sells a million cars a year.

If you can get in the habit of writing to the manufacturer when you are disappointed in a car, when you have a complaint to make, the manufacturer will be much more responsive to the demands of that public. If you will raise the devil with the manufacturer instead of with your dealer, and if a few thousand others do the same thing, you will get what you want in a car instead of taking what you can get.

The dealer supports the industry. He keeps it humming or—when he cannot make sales—allows it to lag. He and his salesmen are the base upon which the great pyramid of the automotive industry is reared to reach its pinnacle in the six-figure salaries paid to big names at the top. He even finances the industry. Not only does he supply the capital to run his own place, but he helps to finance the factory. He pays for his finished cars before the manufacturer pays for the supplies that go into them. The dealer pays on delivery. But the automobile maker doesn't pay his bills for supplies, for steel and windshields and glass and tires, until thirty days after they are delivered. So with the speed-up, supplies can be shipped into the plant, converted into an automobile, delivered and sold and driven away before the factory pays its bills. Sometimes this gets a happy manufacturer into a hole. Money piles up and the optimist may forget that it isn't his. He may spend it in expanding his business, and if there is a sudden drop he will have to reach into his resources. But as a rule the automotive manufacturer gets his profit before he pays his bills. Perhaps that is why Ford was able to get along so well without the New York banks.

The dealer supports the industry and gets very little thanks or consideration either from the buying public or the automotive powers. He always remains an outsider, with no voice and no choice as to the design of the car he is forced to sell, and no right to criticize—indeed, it is dangerous for a dealer to criticize his principal's car if he wishes to retain his dealership; for criticism (in the automobile industry as in many other places) is interpreted as disloyalty.

In one way the dealer is helpless, as he is in no other industry. If he represents Chevrolet and he doesn't like it, he can't turn around and sell a Plymouth. He's got to sell the car he is representing. He is really in a sort of bondage, as though the plant held the dealer as a hostage between itself and the public.

The industry makes a good deal of play about taking care of its dealers. In this very "taking care" the dealer has one of his chief complaints. The men that come around to "assist" him are usually college boys just starting in the automotive business and learning by practicing on the dealer. These "trouble-shooters" don't intend ever to go into the actual selling of cars. They expect to become executives. They give away cigars and keep the dealers stocked up on risqué stories. This is what the industry calls nursing along the dealer.

There are so many stories of the Ford Company's autocratic treatment of employee and dealer that most people believe that it was only they who carried on that way. But all of the automotive manufacturers are autocratic, and not only to the dealer and to the employee, but to the public. The Ford autocracy is more colorful and vivid and perhaps a little more extreme than that of the others.

At one time Ford used to force his dealers to take trac-

tors and Lincoln cars. Even city dealers had to take tractors. He had to discontinue it; he was driving his dealers into bankruptcy. All this is of the past. Dealers get about the same treatment from all companies.

But the favorite story of Ford Company despotism is concerned with their method of firing big executives. Over and over again it has happened that an official would come to his office on Monday morning and find the whole room empty of furniture, his desk gone, his chair, his carpet, his file cabinets, his secretary and her typewriter all gone, nothing left but a bare room. Sometimes a whole department has been moved out—not only is there a blank emptiness in the room of the executive, but the same clean sweep has been made of furniture and files of dozens of subordinates; and this will be their first warning that they no longer have jobs.

The fantastic aspects of this are characteristic of Ford, but the tyranny is true of all the big automotive manufacturers. Where the C.I.O. is strong and labor agreements are in effect, it has quieted down toward the factory employees. But the dealer has no labor union. That, plus the used cars, explains why the National Automobile Dealers' Association "reports that in 1935 only 5.31 per cent of the dealers in the United States managed to earn the 'standard' 5-per cent net profit, while 17.03 per cent lost money."¹

But the automotive manufacturer will do his best within his limits for the dealer. He will do what he can to keep him pepped up, to keep him where he will always see a rising market. What will he do? Well, we haven't room for a long list of samples, but probably Chrysler's action in 1937 was tops in pure gall.

¹ Dewey H. Palmer in *New Republic*, Jan. 5, 1938.

In December, 1937, the newspapers carried a front-page head, "General Motors Lays Off 60,000 Men." Two days later they burst out with another Page 1 story: "Chrysler Hires 30,000 Men." This bothered a lot of people. How could Chrysler hire 30,000 when General Motors was laying off 60,000? Could it be that General Motors was bluffing to scare President Roosevelt or Congress? But it was not General Motors which was bluffing. It was Chrysler. I have not seen the story published anywhere, but I have verified its truth.

Here's what happened. When the General Motors story broke, Chrysler was holding a meeting in Detroit for a thousand of his dealers. It was a bad moment. The General Motors lay-off had sent the Chrysler dealers into the dumps. They had to be sent back home "pepped up." So Chrysler broke the glad news that they had hired 30,000 men. And the newspapers bloomed with news stories and editorials, "While General Motors is laying them off, Chrysler is hiring them." "What Chrysler thinks of the recession." Lovely—the dealers went away with the requisite amount of pep. But two hours later, of the 30,000 men hired, about half were laid off, and at the end of the day the rest got their lay-offs. No more work for them for one or two months.

But Chrysler is trying to do something a little more solid than this for its retailers. The Corporation has agreed to give rebates when prices are cut, and when prices are to be raised to notify the dealers in advance. Also they will allow dealers and distributors to cancel orders placed before such price raises are published. In case the contract is terminated, Chrysler will guarantee to buy back current model cars and undamaged new parts for the previous three models. The next clause is a sad reminder of a practice which has ruined

many a distributor. They will ship no cars unless the dealer orders them. These concessions in themselves indicate how bad the situation had been until now and how bad it still is with other automotive manufacturers. General Motors has a fine-sounding scheme to please the dealer—a Dealer Relations Board, which will give the dealers a nice feeling of democracy. Whether it will give any more remains to be seen.

The bogey of the industry is the second-hand car. It stands straight across the road, rusty and grimy, and the new cars can't go around it. It stands, a shabby reproach to the obsolescence theory which had sent the automotive business to such dazzling heights. Obsolescence means off with the old and on with the new. It means quick wearing out, quick replacement. Its practice has given work to hundreds of thousands of people, and these hundreds of thousands, not too badly paid, have spent money which has come back to you indirectly in the products that you sell, or in reduction of your taxes.

But obsolescence works best on clothes, where the fashions change rapidly, and the clothes wear out almost as fast. Cars do not wear out fast enough, even though experts think that each year they are a bit more flimsy than the year before. The average age of used cars actually running is about four and a half years. "Car makers believe that their products continue to run too long, about eight years, they estimate." Some engineers consider that the average automobile of today is deliberately built to give only three years' service. "*The Journal of the Society of Automotive Engineers* says that 'the average car operates only about 2,100 hours before being relegated to the junk heap; indus-

trial equipment having the same life would last only 262.5 days on an eight-hour-day schedule. . . .' The machines which make the cars will last eight or ten times as long as the products they turn out!"¹

The industry claims that most of the used cars show twenty-five to forty thousand miles on the speedometer. That means, says the factory, that they have been run to the point where large-scale repairs are necessary, and it would be more economical to buy a new car. But why should large-scale repairs be necessary on a car that has been run only forty thousand miles? Engineers say that 5 per cent added to the cost of the car would give it 25 per cent more lasting power. So while the obsolescence idea has built up the automotive giant, it has left a trail of second-hand cars to cough and spit behind its back.

In pleasant advertising language, obsolescence in cars is supposed to mean a continual improvement in manufacture. What it really means is just enough change to make you dissatisfied with the old car to buy a new one. Since cars won't wear out fast enough, they've got to go out of style. Pontiac sounds the keynote, a 1938 Pontiac and a girl in a 1938 spring suit—"The style of the month plus the car of the year."

It's a queer thing, this fashion business about cars. Suppose a man has an automobile that is running well and giving him no trouble. He'd laugh if you suggested that he should have the car overhauled. If the suggestion came from an automobile mechanic who might be looking for a profit, the car owner would be suspicious. But General Motors tells the same man that the 1938 Chevrolet has a new "tiptoe-matic" clutch, or that Oldsmobile has a new

¹ Dewey H. Palmer, *op. cit.*

Bakelite instrument board. If he can afford it, he'll cheerfully throw in his last year's car, good though it was. Chrysler shows him a photograph with a new look to the front end—no change inside the car at all. The customer doesn't laugh at Chrysler or throw suspicious looks at General Motors—he buys a new car.

There are 30,000,000 registered cars in the U. S. Of these, 70 per cent—21,000,000—belong to families which earn \$25 or \$30 a week. That means a second-hand car. The man whose family earns less than \$1,500 a year can't pay \$750 for a new car. In *Middletown* the Lynds point out that many people sell their homes, wear shabby clothing, eat poorer food, do without bathrooms, in order to have a car. And why not? The car opens up their lives, keeps the family together. Many of them find it's cheaper to live off the main lines and drive themselves to work. Some of them believe that owning a car will lead them to making more money. The auto people have helped build up this delusion. "Hit the trail to better times!" says one ad.

Another depicts a gray-haired banker lending a young couple the money to buy a car and proffering the friendly advice: "Before you can save money, you first must make money. And to make it you must have health, contentment, and full command of all your resources. . . . I have often advised customers of mine to buy cars, as I have felt that the increased stimulation and opportunity of observation would enable them to earn amounts equal to the cost of their cars."¹

Tide says that ten million automobiles in use at the beginning of 1938 were built before 1931, and it is on these ten million that the automobile industry blamed its troubles. So an immense effort was made to clear these second-

¹ *Middletown*.

hand cars out of the dealers' stores and, if possible, to get them off the road altogether.

Used cars were advertised in two entirely contradictory ways. To the buyer they were glorified with as much novelty and sales appeal as new cars. To the owner they were ridiculed by cartoons and editorials and attacked as road dangers. Newspapers and radio helped along enthusiastically.

From March 5 to March 12, 1938, \$1,250,000 was spent for national advertising (besides a large amount for local) to push a National Used Car Exchange Week. There was plenty of talk about bargains, but these cars were not bargains. Their prices were higher than those of the usual second-hand car. If in the spring of 1938 you looked at a newsreel, you were almost certain to see a bonfire of used cars taken off the road because of defective brakes or poor steering gear or for some other road danger. "Highway safety" was the theme. No doubt many rattletraps belonged in the scrap heap—but it was no accident that these public-spirited burnings happened in South Bend, in Buffalo, and in so many other places all at the same time.

The campaign was a wonder worker. *Variety* (Mar. 16, 1938) says that about 200,000 used cars were sold during the special week, that these sales were about 100 per cent better than for the same week a year before. Besides, they advanced the usual spring season about a month, which was a help to the new models coming along.

After all this had been cleaned up, the manufacturers began to cut prices on new models. Though in one way welcome enough to the dealers, in another way it caused a disastrous confusion among them. The stock in their shops was now worth less than it had been a month before. They were deluged with complaints from customers who had

paid higher prices for their cars. Says the gossip sheet, *Space and Time*, "A price reduction is a dose of salts for the whole clogged up distribution system. But it may also be as deadly to the dealers as a Mickey Finn to an appendicitis patient."

So the next time you talk to your dealer, remember that although he is making what he can out of you, at the same time both you and he would be better off if you could line up together against the manufacturer.

18. LIGHTER CARS—HEAVIER ADS

ALTOGETHER, what you pay for labor and material is a small share of the \$750 price. Yet, thanks to the assembly line method, you get more fabricated material for your money than has ever been sold before. If the lamp on your table were standardized and made this way, you'd probably pay 50 cents for it instead of five dollars. Compare what you get in the way of fabricated material in a hundred dollar couch to what you get in a \$750 car.

It is really the overhead which piles up the price, and silly changes or the obsolescence theory, if you prefer. In order to get just a little twist of new style, it is necessary to prepare new dies for a whole new body, and that costs at least \$100,000. It may be necessary to make a design and the machinery for manufacturing a new engine, and that may cost \$1,000,000. For every small change that you get in your car, a new die or other tool has to be made. This has to be amortized each year and added to what you pay for your car.

But is it you who demand these novelties? Apparently not. The big automotive companies have elaborate questionnaires which they send out to customers and to dealers. General Motors has something called Customer Research. This may remind you of Consumers Research or Consumers Union, but it's quite different. It is merely the snowstorm of questionnaires which General Motors sends out to car-owners each year. These ask for opinions on "no-

draft ventilation," "knee-action wheels," "stream-lining," and that sort of thing. Also for suggestions and even for drawings of new ideas. But they seem to pay little attention to the answers when they get them. Packard's answers from customers showed that they wanted a reduced price. So Packard raised the price and put its emphasis on style, both in the making of the car and in the advertising.

Who then demands the low-slung cars, except a few people who care for nothing but looks? Tall people and stout people are awkward getting in and out of the low doors. In many of the big cities people who can afford them buy British cars because they have wide windows and because you can get into them in a high hat without smashing it. Country drivers say the low car gets mired to the hub caps.

For visibility and driving today's car is far more dangerous than many an old rattletrap that is being burned up as a menace to the road. The low-slung car doesn't swing as much in getting around corners, but it skids more easily. The old car may have turned over more easily when it got a chance, but it stood up better in a collision. The driver sits low behind the cowl. The hood is too high and too wide, and he can't see what's low down on the road for ten feet ahead of him. That, according to many authorities, accounts for the increase in accidents to children. If a child is right in front of the hood of your car, you can't see it.

The Accident Prevention Conference of the United States Department of Commerce says ¹ that no progress has been made in recent years in improving automobile headlights.

¹ In pamphlet, "Accidents and Opportunity."

Apparently the public wants economy and safety more than anything else. The "stream-lined" car satisfies neither of these demands. Why then the stream-line?

The stream-lined cars abruptly threw every older automobile into obsolescence. They made even good cars look old-fashioned. It was an easy and flashy way to make people buy new cars. The industry has made the stream-line so fashionable that it cannot go back to the old-fashioned, comfortable car. Anyway, why should it from a commercial point of view, since the stream-line costs much less to manufacture? It takes only a few operations to stamp out a stream-lined top, while the old-style took a great many more operations to weld on. You will notice that all lines on a stream-lined car turn out. No line can turn back or turn in no matter how much that would help the car in operation or in speed. This is essential if a car is to be stamped out and put together with a minimum of operations.

Since it provides jobs for an army of men, the obsolescence theory would be all right if it were used to make better or safer cars. But it is not. In durability, safety, and visibility, the 1938 cars show no improvement. The engines are bigger, the cars are faster, the driver can see less. The only improvement of importance is the reduction of weight. Instead of definite improvements in cars, "Engineers are hard-pressed to think up new arrangements of grilles, head lamps, instrument panels, to meet the demands of the sales departments for 'brand-new' cars."¹ If, instead of all this nonsense, cars could be made safer, slower, cheaper to run, then the obsolescence theory would be completely justified.

¹ Dewey H. Palmer, *op. cit.*

All right, then—here are billions of dollars' worth of cars each year. And millions of dollars for the auto manufacturers to advertise them with. The automotive accounts in newspapers, magazines, and radio are huge industries in themselves. Car and truck makers in 1936 spent \$41,000,000 in newspapers, magazines, and network alone. Add accessory makers, gasoline and oil and tire companies, and the total comes up to \$65,000,000. (The millions spent on local radio stations and on circulars are not included.) This was \$24,000,000 higher than 1933, though it was lower than 1929 and 1930. In 1936 General Motors, the biggest account in the United States, spent over \$13,000,000; Chrysler spent nearly \$5,000,000; Ford over \$4,500,000; Hudson and Nash about \$1,500,000 each.

In spite of millions spent on radio, the bulk of appropriations still goes into magazines and newspapers. An average division would be 60 per cent in newspapers, 30 per cent in magazines, and 10 per cent on radio. Ford spends more on radio and little in magazines. Of magazines, the *Saturday Evening Post* far outdistances all the others. Next in order come *Collier's*, *Time*, *Life*,¹ *New Yorker*, and so on down. As you can see, the bulk of the money goes into newspapers and weeklies. That fits in with the rushing news pressure feeling of the industry. After the national weeklies come farm and trade papers, and, lastly, the monthlies. But in the last five years these have received little automobile advertising.

The money in newspapers is spent to back up the dealer. Toward it each Chevrolet dealer, for instance, pays \$6 on

¹ Everything said about *Life* is subject to change as the magazine's advertising and circulation is in a continually shifting state.

each car delivered to him. This is automatically added to his bill.

The advertising agency usually keeps a representative in the district to nurse the dealer. Although, like most accounts, automobile advertising is planned for a year ahead, it is checked up on a ten-day basis. If the price of cotton goes up, southern advertising increases. If the price of wheat drops, Middle Western advertising is cut. If there is a big lay-off in a factory district, advertising there is canceled. This is another reason why the weeklies and the dailies are favorite media. Copy can be changed or canceled or increased in the weekly much more easily than in a monthly magazine.

The public thinks that most of the advertising energy of the automobile manufacturer goes into radio, but as you see by the figures above, this isn't so. As far as direct sales are concerned, the results from radio advertising have been on the whole unreliable and meager. The programs of good music which you hear are institutional, intended to get goodwill. In this aim two campaigns have been successful. The Ford Sunday evening hour sometimes brings in 100,000 requests for reprints of the Cameron talk. The General Motors safety campaign a couple of years ago also built up much public friendship. Such programs aren't meant so much to make money as to save money on taxes and wages.

It is impossible to get definite statements of opinion from the automobile manufacturers about the results on huge expenditures for direct sales on radio. But it takes no expert to see that the outpouring of radio money was going on while the sales went down the chute. Of course, the radio advertising didn't send down the sales. The sales went

down for other reasons told in the preceding chapter. But the immense radio expenditures couldn't stop their fall. After all, how is it possible to tell a real sales story about an automobile on the radio without exhausting the listener? Automobile selling talk needs pictures as well as words. Here is one product which will be easier to advertise with television. But certain spot programs have done very well, partly because they cost less, partly because they were arranged to fit local conditions. Chevrolet has just arranged to go back on a huge local radio campaign.

But what about the advertising itself? Is it like the cars themselves—impenetrable metal and little windows, with no light?

There is really something thick-headed about automobile advertising. It seems to go by weight rather than by brains. The people who work on it rarely know anything except automobiles. The industry does not want men who have had experience in selling anything else. A man whose chief work has been on automobile advertising cannot handle any other kind of agency account. It seems as though automobile advertising men try not to learn anything else.

From the beginning the automobile business has been tied up with show, with sensation, with theatrical bombast, rather than with quality. In 1908 the J. Walter Thompson agency had a choice between the Ford account (\$25,000 a year) and the more showy Hudson motor car (\$150,000 a year). The biggest figure in the automobile world at that time was Hugh Chalmers, maker of the Chalmers car. The J. Walter Thompson Company paid him \$1,000 for an opinion as to the future of the Ford car. His considered opinion was that Ford would never amount to anything

great, might possibly reach 75,000 cars a year, that the car was a cheap contrivance, its owners would always be ashamed of it.

The J. Walter Thompson Company chose the Hudson account. Mr. Chalmers' company went out of business, and he then manufactured baby carriages. People do not buy many baby carriages these days. If they live in small towns or the country, or even in some cities, they take the baby out in the trusty Ford.

Ford has since gone in for "show" himself, but in those days had nothing to do with the speed races, the loud horn, the "red devil," the flying veil, the dash, the big money, the racing cars turning over in the great bowl in Indianapolis.

That was only twenty-five or thirty years ago. The automobile people have grown up in this dramatic atmosphere. Their business has grown swiftly. Their sales have been based on hurry. They have sold speed, snobbishness, pleasure. But also they have sold the romance of seashore and mountains and the "lure" of the country road, of the great sweeping highways into the future, into joy, into petting parties.

But there has been a great change in the advertising in the last two years, a change which has been a puzzle to advertising men. They know that the new line of copy has been a good salesman and nearly all of them are imitating it. But they do not know why it has rung the bell. What has happened is that automobile advertising, after years of being feminine, has suddenly gone masculine.

Let us look back a bit into the history of modern advertising. Modern advertising isn't old—it's a mere infant. But you are a bad advertising man if you look back on its

forty-odd years. To do a good job, you've got to think neither of the past nor the future, but of today.

Forty, thirty, even twenty-five years ago, all advertising was much like the successful automobile advertising of today. It was ugly, black, confused, emphatic. Slowly it changed in tendency until it became handsome, clean, and persuasive. Partly this was because the advertising men themselves learned more about art and type. But there was a deeper reason—the real change was from an appeal to men to an appeal to women. In my earlier years in the business, we never thought of writing advertising for women. When I got a job in the circulation department of the *Woman's Home Companion* in 1910, I was worried. I had never written a line of advertising to reach women, and I didn't know how. I had to learn it, and it came rather hard. In 1912 one or two of the bigger agencies hired women like me with reluctance. Here and there a man thought that women did the buying and that other women knew how to write for them.

But though I wrote copy on all kinds of women's accounts from corsets to cooking pots, the business I controlled was largely with sets of books to be sold by mail. And on those I wrote entirely for men. Not one set in ten went to women. The Photographic History of the Civil War (Brady war pictures), O. Henry, Mark Twain, Kipling—these we advertised to men. The mail order installment book business was then a big one, now it is insignificant. The authority of women in buying for the house has helped to throw out sets of books. The men bought them to read, but the women used them for furniture. The modern woman prefers a new set of slip covers.

When the mail order book business became feminine, it

also became more vulgar and went into a decline. The first step in this feminization was the advertising of the Book of Etiquette. Some men bought it, to be sure, but the appeal was to women, and it went over big. You may remember, the book told you what to do if you upset the coffee on the tablecloth, and how to order in a restaurant. That was women's stuff. If men bought, they bought to please the women. It was this sort of thing—"When I sat down to play, they all laughed," "When I spoke French they threw eggs at me"—all for women.

The idea began to percolate that women were doing most of the buying in America. The women's magazines claimed that women bought 90 per cent of all the goods sold. This was only a slight exaggeration. Not only did women buy their own clothes, and nearly all food, but they had the final voice in the house furnishings. They even had a good deal to say about men's shirts, socks, underwear. Many women bought these outright, and many advised about suits, overcoats, and hats. Women had plenty to say about refrigerators, about floorings, about house design. Only a few products were advertised right along to men. Furnaces, tires, gasoline, oil—these never tried to do much with women. Makers of iron piping and machinery stood boldly on their masculinity.

Automobile advertising especially was clean, open, and handsome, with young people going out on parties, or children warm and cozy in the back seat. They stopped advertising motors, carburetors, transmission, etc., because of the idea that women were buying the cars. One car even had an interior designed by Elsie De Wolfe, the decorator who goes in for extremes in feminine interiors. She

brought the "petite Trianon" atmosphere into the automobile world.

But the figure of 90 per cent has turned out to be a little too high. One-eighth of the national income is spent for automobiles and accessories. Certain automobile manufacturers, or rather certain advertising agencies, seem to have got the idea at last that of this one-eighth a great deal of the spending was in the hands of men. I don't know that they consciously figured out that the men were being neglected in the advertising talk. More likely, trained to appeal to men, masculine in approach and temperament, these agents wrote what seemed to them a natural kind of copy.

It happened almost at the same time on two accounts—De Soto and Dodge. De Soto had gone a bit masculine in its manufacture anyway. It had just had an outstanding failure. That year they were making an ugly car, much heavier than a car of its size had any right to be. There was a good story in the weight of that car if they had stuck to it and pounded away at it. But they were afraid the public wouldn't like its looks. So they tried to make it seem different in the ads, not solid and heavy, but light and airy, by calling it "Airflo." It went over so badly that as soon as a New York dealer took in a second-hand De Soto the factory bought it back and shipped it out of town so that people wouldn't see it around New York and be reminded of the failure.

They abandoned the masculine car, but they went in for masculine advertising. J. Stirling Getchell got up bold, brutal, and ugly copy, which has been an astonishing success. And at about the same time Ruthrauff & Ryan hit the bell with a masculine campaign for Dodge. Excited by these, all the others, except Cadillac and Packard, fol-

lowed along in servile and sometimes pointless imitation.

All this new copy was to me almost startling in its resemblance to what we did in the old days before we knew about fine type layout. It was so black and so loud, that page after page of it in a magazine or newspaper was disturbing even to people who had no taste. If everybody is yelling, nobody can be heard. The new ones had one big advantage: they had fine action photographs. De Soto's were by Margaret Bourke-White.

In their hurry to imitate, some of the advertisers abandoned all sense. Pontiac, trying to do the same thing, made a hodge-podge by mixing up all the ideas in this type of advertising. In one small page it contains two or three photographs and a drawing, five or six kinds of type, a big circle, people on skis, a girl being taken home from a party, and across all of it a ruler running on a slant. It looks like some kind of a jigsaw puzzle, and maybe the public enjoys trying to disentangle it.

To many people these advertisements have been a shock. But they were no surprise to any mail order graduate. Ruthrauff & Ryan, responsible for the biggest of these campaigns, at first did exclusively mail order book advertising, and it was always the mail order theory that the customer wants to be talked to with a pounding, clenched fist. This is exactly what this new automobile advertising did. It pounded the table.

In stating this briefly like this, I must seem sometimes to overstate. I do not mean that Dodge and De Soto no longer advertised to women at all. In the Dodge ads there was usually a woman in the car, sometimes driving, sometimes a woman movie star, and occasionally an ad with only a woman and the old snob appeal—Mrs. Whosis standing

before a \$50,000 house with an \$800 Dodge. But even here these women were not elegant or fashionable. They were rather the type that appeals to men. The big drive was not on Carole Lombard, but on Wallace Beery. "I like 'em tough," yelled Beery in black big type in one of their most successful ads. Toughness, ugliness, and prices. But even though the ads are so masculine, why, you ask, do they have to be so ugly? Because, dear reader, all those nice novels and magazine articles about the American Man and the American Woman were true. The women have more taste. They like better-looking ads. I have a suspicion, too, that maybe the tendency of the whole country is toward ugliness anyway. We're on a backward swing. Clothes and furniture and houses are beginning to have touches of rococo, while the poorer lot of modernistic stuff is merely harsh and brutal. The ads follow the fashions—naturally.

De Soto and Dodge aren't the only ones who are doing profitable advertising. The customer also responded well to the Chrysler campaign which talked about "unseen value." There is as much unseen value in a Chrysler as there is in a Stradivarius, in the pitchblende from which the Curies got radium, or in an uncut black diamond. Though Chrysler is a union factory and has had excellent relations with its employees, this is never mentioned in the advertising.

As you can see, most automobile advertising has been conducted without much logic. Somebody tries this, somebody tries that. If it pays, the others follow along. You must remember that when the successful campaigns were appearing, a great many others spent millions that weren't so successful. There are so many silly ads to be found at any time that it would be hard to make a selection. In desper-

tion for copy, the advertisers are taking the most commonplace adjuncts of a car and advertising them as though they were individual and unusual. One car ad boasts of micromatic gears. "Micromatic" seems to be a coined word based on the micrometer . . . which is obviously an instrument for exact measurements. Do you know any car whose gears are not made by microscopically exact measurements? But that coined word was worth something to the ad men and money was spent to send it over the land. A "valve engine" is just an engine . . . or do they know some engines without valves? Buick claims to be "torque free." What does that mean anyway? A torque is a twist. Can you have a driving rod without a torque, asks the mechanic?

Here are two ads which turned out to be silly because they were close together. In the *Saturday Evening Post* for January 22, 1938, there were two automobile ads, both in four colors. One was a single page of Cadillac. That cost \$11,500. The other, a double-page spread of Plymouth, cost \$23,000. As far as the reader can make out, both cars offer exactly the same thing to a customer, although the Cadillac is more dignified and has a more beautiful illustration. Apparently if you were to believe these advertisements, you get for \$750 in a Plymouth just as much as you can get from a Cadillac at \$2,000. This is obviously nonsense. Either somebody is lying or somebody doesn't know how to write ads.

Automobile men say that these two ads were so alike because you cannot interest the public in what really makes a Cadillac better than a Plymouth. You can't advertise things like Rockwell hardness, gear tooth finish, tolerances, inspections, and casting. Automobile buyers must be sold

on things that are simple and, preferably, can be seen. And always, chiefly, on the size and gleam of the package.

"But it is just possible," says James W. Young, "that the advertiser has hold of a kind of truth which is not measurable in laboratories . . . that in an automobile we desire more than transportation. There may be in it for us what Edith Wharton called 'the utility of the useless.' Its line and color may delight us. Its very radiator cap may be to us a symbol of social status. Or we may just love the smart little look of it when the top is down and we are in it with a red hat on!"¹

The public is easily fooled by appearances. But certainly it would be possible to make Rockwell hardness or gear tooth finish as exciting as a smooth surface or a new body design. And inspections have been made both dramatic and effective in the ads.

But it is much harder to make such things exciting, and advertising men, like everybody else, take an easier way. A little too easy is the ad of the Sealed Power Corporation, which pitifully tries to sell piston rings by showing an excessively naked girl in a black chemise and red hair. She's getting a box of flowers accompanied by a card that reads: ". . . It says that 12 out of the 21 American makes of cars used sealed power piston rings." But, of course, no advertising man ever did anything as foolish as that. That must have been the client.

Since the advertising as a whole is conducted with little logic, it is often possible to sell the manufacturer a pretty wild idea. One maker hadn't liked Hearst's *American Weekly* as a medium, but a good salesman got hold of him

¹ *Good Housekeeping*, May, 1935.

and assured him that the reason his advertising didn't pay in the *American Weekly* was because he had never used it the right way. "What you want to do is to take a double-page spread in full color and offer a free demonstration. Then you will see how many people read our paper." They tried it. It cost \$36,000. The result was disaster. Telegrams began to flood the factory from dealers. "Who is going to pay for the gas we are using for all these free rides you advertised?" And that's about all that came out of the \$36,000 gamble.

To the outsider it seems that the general loudness of automobile advertising may hide many doubts. They yell because they think they have nothing to say. It might be better first to have something to say and then the advertising would follow on naturally as it does with many other products. Think what a selling point a car would have that could say, "With our headlights you can see in the twilight," or "You can get into this car without bumping your head," or "Safety First in the——1939!"

19. MAIL ORDER

IF a psychiatrist gave you the words *mail order* as a test, your reaction would almost certainly be Sears, Roebuck. Or if the test word were *Montgomery Ward*, your reaction would be mail order. There is other mail order business in America—plenty of it. There are general mail order houses and those who sell this or that specialty. But Montgomery Ward and Sears, Roebuck are so much bigger than all others that in explaining about mail order business we will devote our time to them; and since Sears is the larger of the two, we will give our time to Sears. Almost every word I say about them is true also of Montgomery Ward. But don't get this wrong. It is by no means true of all mail order business. Far from it.

In the beginning, the mail order business was a thoroughly shifty and crooked affair. But these two large mail order houses follow a policy of strict truthfulness. In the early years, such honesty in dealing with customers seemed fantastic. People wondered why Julius Rosenwald, president of Sears, Roebuck, bothered to be so altruistic. The honesty was, no doubt, natural to Mr. Rosenwald, or else he never would have thought of it at all. It was nonetheless a shrewd business policy, so good that since then almost all big retailers dealing directly with the customer have found it a good policy to follow. In a mail order business, where the customer does not see the goods before he buys, it is a life-saving quality.

In my early days in advertising, I did a great deal of work on books that were sold by mail. If the books were about history or science, we promised the reader an education. But we never tried in the beginning to sell those books on their merits. If we advertised a set of Dickens, we screamed about the bargain, about how big the books were, and how much the set weighed, and how many other people had bought it. Our hardest job was trying to think of a new excuse for calling the books a bargain. They were far from bargains; their prices were inflated beyond all reason. The shrewdest of our tricks, devised by George P. Metzger, was to take a perfectly good set of books, new, out of the bindery, and sell it at a reduced price as damaged. We were selling a new set for, say, \$35, and a supposedly damaged set for \$25, and the two were exactly alike.

It was not until 1912 that it occurred to me that maybe we could sell sets of books for what was inside them. I began to advertise O. Henry by telling a little of the stories and by arousing the kind of emotions that the stories themselves would arouse in a reader. But even then we made false claims about price. We gave away sets free that weren't really free because their cost had been figured in.

The same was true of our sets of Mark Twain. The beginning of our ads was always completely honest. I loved Mark Twain and I liked writing about him, and what I said of him as a writer I meant. But the ads always had to wind up with some bargain nonsense, some "hurry-up" call which was a fraud.

It is true that we couldn't sell those books any other way. The public didn't want to buy sets of books, and the only way to move them to do so was by excited hurry-up talk at the end. Nearly all of this mail order book business

has since then collapsed. The public is a little wiser, has learned a little more about buying. Mail order is the one branch of business where advertising honesty is essential. You can't make a lasting success of mail order selling any other way. The reason is this: Mail order people send their goods on approval. If the customer doesn't like them, he sends them back, and every package sent back is a loss to the advertiser.

Neither Sears, Roebuck nor Montgomery Ward does much advertising in magazines or newspapers or even on the radio. They have found that this doesn't pay them, and the reason is simple. Their circulation for their catalogs is so huge that they have nothing to gain from such newspaper or radio advertising. Sears, Roebuck sends out 6,500,000 catalogs, and does it twice a year. Allowing about three and a half people to a family, which is the accepted average, that means that the catalog goes to 23,000,000 people. Not more catalog users, but less, is their problem. This mammoth page book costs between sixty cents and one dollar to compile, print, and mail.

Besides the main catalog, there are many pamphlets, and of the same general character, although smaller, called Bargain Bulletins or "Economy Specials" or "Summer Savings" or something of that sort. These often show large prices crossed off with a smaller price below, and whenever they do so the reduction is a real one.

Writing the catalog is a difficult job. The company judges each page naturally by its results in sales. Careful records are kept of every page and every article. Each article is charged with so much in advertising space, and sales have to show a profit. The copy writers have my sympathy. I once tried to write that kind of copy and made a dismal

failure of it. There was a job in the mail order department of the old Siegel-Cooper Company, a New York department store which has long been out of business. They gave me a test. They hung a nice-looking woman's suit before me and told me to write a description. I did and thought it was fine. But they didn't think it was so good. Apparently I left off most of the buttons and a few of the pockets. I didn't see the fine pleating and I got the lining all wrong. The interlining I didn't know even existed. I had written a lot of fine words, but the customer would never have recognized the suit from my description.

No, the copy-writing staff in a house like Sears' or Ward's has to get right down to brass tacks and stay there. It is much easier, I assure you, to write pages and design layouts that are novel and sensational. But the customer would like the brilliant writing and forget what it was all about. And that, by the way, is a little fault that general advertising people fall into all the time. They go creative and forget that all they are trying to do is to sell somebody a bill of goods.

It is a hard and fast rule in the Sears organization that a copy writer for the catalog must always subordinate his writing to the article for sale. The merchandise must stand out on the horizon. If the writer, through any trick of literary style, captures the reader's attention so that the merchandise is a secondary thought, then that copy writer is no good. He ought to be writing novels, or something, instead of monkeying with merchandise to be sold by mail.

Most cooks will tell you that it is not hard to cook one dish for a meal, but to cook four and five and to have all of them finished at the same moment—that takes managing. To have the forty or fifty thousand items in the cata-

log all chosen, pictured, put into words and set in type, so they will be ready for the printer on a given date, is a job in itself.

What's going into the catalog? How much space is each department going to be allowed? How much for each item? Then the "theme song" has to be decided on. That means that one definite idea runs through the texture of everything written in that particular issue. At one time the Sears theme song was "Lowest prices in our history," and the accent was almost wholly on price. In another issue there was the note of superior quality. In the 1936 catalog the Golden Jubilee of the fifty-year-old organization was stressed.

Every copy writer in the advertising business ought to be made to study the mail order catalog closely and carefully. He would be a much better copy writer when he got through. If he were lucky he might get hold of a book in use in the Sears catalog department which is called an *Advertising Guide*. It is a book of fifty-six pages and has been republished every year since 1908 with additions and changes. These guides are company property, and I don't know how you can get hold of one. But there is one on the desk of every Sears copy writer. The *Guide* is a remarkable manual of advertising and it contains a stern and immutable law for those who prepare copy for the catalog. It is discouraging to florid imaginations. The copy writer has to stick to facts. I reproduce here some of its positive orders.

"Price comparison," it says, "must be truthful and of such nature that we can easily substantiate any statement we make."

"Do not use the term 'our one profit' unless we manu-

facture the goods. Exaggerated statements on this subject are to be avoided."

"Avoid saying 'Free,' unless the article, in fact, is free, to be distributed on request like special catalogs and samples of materials. In making combination offers, say 'Both for,' or 'Included without extra charge,' or 'At the usual price of the——alone.'"

Perhaps this grew out of a mistake that happened one year when they offered a watch with a boy's suit. It was meant to be a combination offer. The sale was for both or neither, but the copy writer and the catalog department enthusiastically and generously said, "It's our treat. Accept the watch with our compliments." So a lot of customers, who we will assume were boys, kept the watch and returned the suit.

Here is a dry one.

"Copy reading 'regardless of cost' should be used sparingly, as cost is always regarded."

And another one equally dry, which has nothing to do with price, but is a near relative.

"Avoid carefully statements like: 'Over 50,000 Sold During the Last Eight Weeks.' It is not necessary to tell competitors the volume of our sales."

But if the copy writers are expected to be accurate in their talk about price, they are expected to be regular fuss-budgets of accuracy in their descriptions of the goods. There are so many words that have been used loosely in America for so long that they have come to have no meaning to the customer, or else a false meaning. Sears has taken a number of these words and defined them carefully. First they used these definitions only for their copy writers. Now they publish them in the catalog. Here are a few:

All Wool—The yarn or fabric must be made entirely of sheep wool with no more than 3% allowed for other fibers which might be picked up during manufacturing. This applies to all items except blankets which can have no more than 2% allowance. If other substances are present above allowance, percentage of wool must be given.

Wool—Same as All Wool.

Pre-Shrunk—Used to describe fabrics that will not shrink over 3% in either direction when given a standard wash test or when washed by a commercial laundry. Although many fabrics will show practically no shrinkage, this allowance is essential because of possible shrinkage of stitched seams in garments.

Pure Dye—Applied to a silk fabric which contains no more than 10% of any substance (metallic or other type) other than silk. Black pure dye silk may contain as high as 15%. Other things being equal, pure-dye silk will give far better service than weighted silk.

Waterproof—Applied to fabrics which must pass a severe spray test in which over 1 qt. (1000 c.c.) of water per minute falls from a height of 4 feet on 7 square inches of fabric, supported at a 45° angle. No drop of water must penetrate the fabric within 24 hours.

But besides those in the catalog, there are dozens of others in the *Advertising Guide*. Here's a bit of accuracy about buckskin:

The term "Buckskin" may be used to describe only genuine buckskin. If a leather has been suède finished to resemble buckskin, no reference may be made to it in the heading. The actual name of the leather followed by "Commonly known as Buckskin" or "Buckskin Grained Cowhide" should be stated in the description.

Or this:

Linen weave may not be used because any weave can be made from linen fibers. There is no weave which is always

made of linen. The use of this term cannot be condemned too strongly as being misleading and inaccurate.

It would not be necessary for Sears to make these orders so strong if such twists of fact were not common trade practices; and if the average copy writer had not been trained to the notion that a certain amount of misrepresentation is clever.

Here's a careful one: "Raincoats must not be described as 'rainproof' unless the seams as well as the fabric are rainproof as tested by our laboratory."

Again an old-fashioned, loosely used advertising claim is nailed to its proper mast:

Direct from Factory to User should not be used unless the factory is owned or controlled by us. Reference to "our factory" or "factories controlled by us" should not be made unless it is a fact.

The *Advertising Guide* is at war with exaggeration in all its forms. It says: "Exaggerated claims and unrestrained superlatives undermine customers' confidence. Therefore, avoid free use of such expressions as Best, Finest, Biggest, and avoid all statements the truth of which may be questioned. Following are a few samples of statements which should not be made unless justified by facts:

Lowest Prices in America.

America's strongest work pants.

World's largest dealer in lawn mowers.

And here is something for anyone who does advertising. They are very careful about the way people should be addressed. The word "must" is not to be used when it makes a demand, as "Orders must be mailed," or "must reach us."

Instructions are to use the word "Customers" instead of "families" or "folks." The term "dear customer" is forbidden. There are no ladies and gents in the catalog. It refers to men as "men," and to women as "women." Copy writers are forbidden to write "Xmas," meaning Christmas. "There is no such word," says the *Advertising Guide*.

Of course, there are many slip-ups. Some of those in the last few years, which were okayed, set in type and caught by the proofreading department are:

"Sears are Headquarters for Nuts!" (On a page of nuts in the Christmas Book.)

"Black Ladies' Gloves!"

"You Can't Beat Our Carpets and Rugs!"

You would look vainly in the catalog for any reference to union-made goods, and yet Sears sells an enormous amount of such goods. The Sears catalog is printed in a union shop, but it carries no union label. We can only assume that the farmers who form the bulk of Sears trade are still opposed to labor unions.

Sears has a special school for their copy writers, and besides that, has something called a Copy Clinic. This Copy Clinic is a periodic meeting of everybody from top to bottom in the department. Its minutes make lively reading. There are occasional lectures, but mostly there are eager arguments about this and that. At one meeting of the Copy Clinic the women insisted that sob sister advertising is usually written by men. One girl said crisply that no woman, trying to sell another woman a child's dress, would use such expressions as "Daddy's Little Sweetheart" or "Mamma's little darling would look cute in this dress." The same girl claimed that men overstress the matter of style in

appealing to women, that it's better to tell a woman that a neckline will flatter her face than that it is the latest thing in Hollywood.

I must say that the Sears catalog seems to me to have a masculine air about it except in the department of women's suits and underwear. Even the kitchen departments seem to lack a truly feminine feeling. Montgomery Ward's seems much more feminine.

The minutes of these Copy Clinics are discourses in practical psychology. They would be of priceless value to any advertising writer because they are based on experience rather than on theory. But they would be of value to anyone who ever writes anything, even if it's only a postcard, or perhaps especially if it's only a postcard. Economy of space in the catalog doesn't need to mean poverty of style.

The determining factor in word selection, according to the Copy Clinic, is the vocabulary of the reader, not the writer. Never must the catalog use a word that the reader will not understand, and "where you have the choice of a long word and a short word use the short word." The Clinic believes that short sentences are more powerful than complex or compound sentences. Long, involved sentences and paragraphs are hard work for the reader. "Make it a habit," says the Clinic, "to use Anglo-Saxon words as much as possible instead of Latin or Greek derivatives. Anglo-Saxon is the milk we were raised on."

Here are a few more prohibitions extracted from the proceedings of the Copy Clinic:

- don't say "perspiration"; say "sweat";
- don't say "retire"; say "go to bed";
- don't say "nutrition"; say "food";
- don't say "residence"; say "home";

- don't say "maternal relative"; say "mother";
- don't say "lacrimal secretions"; say "tears."

As a warning against the use of pomp and generalities rather than simplicity and directness, the director one day read to the Copy Clinic four of the thirty-three standardized telegrams offered by the telegraph companies to visitors at the Chicago Century of Progress, or World's Fair.

The two "canned" messages chosen most often by the senders were:

MISS YOU AT THIS FAIR. IF YOU WERE HERE MY JOY WOULD BE COMPLETE. SENDING MUCH LOVE WITH THIS WIRE.

And this:

MY OLD DOGS GET TIRED BUT IT'S WORTH IT TO SEE ALL THERE IS TO SEE. REGARDS TO ALL.

The two standardized messages which were least popular are these:

THE FUTURE OF THE COUNTRY THAT HAS PRODUCED WHAT THIS FAIR COMMEMORATES CANNOT BE IN DOUBT. IT IS AN INSPIRING EXHIBIT.

And here is another dud:

IF YOU WOULD SEE THE DREAMS OF GREAT MEN REALIZED IN THE FULLNESS OF BEAUTY AND USE, DON'T MISS THIS FAIR.

In spite of these rules which I believe every writer could read with profit, the catalog does slip up on such unhappy headlines as "The Secret of Floor Personality." This is sad enough from an esthetic point of view. From an advertising point of view, it seems to me even worse. "The Most Talked-of Sheet in America,"—a headline in the catalog—is inane. But on the other hand, I admire the astuteness

which calls a silk "Tiara Crepe" thus creating an atmosphere of luxury while saving many words of description. It seems absurd to have two opposing pages on mattresses, one of which is headed, "A Luxury Sleep Product," and the other, "Sears Super Luxury Sleep," the odd thing being that the Super one costs five dollars less than the other.

Good-looking advertising, with lots of white space, handsome illustrations and reserved typography, does not stand up well in Sears tests. In a recent catalog Hercules overalls were advertised in this fashion. At the same time, in another circular, the same overalls were advertised in the old, crude manner—a big picture of a man in overalls, ugly, crowded type. It was nothing to brag about in the way of artistic design, but 21 per cent more customers were inspired to buy overalls from it than from the better-looking page.

Here is another test. A page advertised five pairs of women's shoes. It was attractive and dignified, with the heading, "Gems of Fashion." Prices were given a small place. The talk was mainly about fashions in footwear.

The same shoes, at the same prices, were then used for a page in a different Flyer. On this page the type was flaring; the prices were given at the top of the page, and they stood out like a red nose. The headline read: "Every Pair an Irresistible Buy: A Surprise for Your Purse."

In this contest, "Gems of Fashion" was a loser—most decidedly. Most of the orders came from the heavy-typed, inartistic presentation.

General advertising, which is the trade name for most advertising that you see, looks much finer than these pages of the Sears or Ward catalogs, but from no point of view

is it as good advertising. It does not come as near the truth; the public doesn't trust it as much. With few exceptions, it doesn't sell as much goods for the amount of money spent.

There is another type of mail order advertising that used to be enormous, and that is the correspondence course. There are still a few courses left, but they have had to change their policy to meet a changing public.

The International Correspondence School, which is one of the chief of these advertisers, says that before the depression they were able to use the same advertisement year after year with equal effectiveness. That was true of the old mail order book business. We would run an ad in February, say, and then we would run the same ad again in November, and again during the following year. Some pieces of copy were used for twenty years. Since 1929 the International Correspondence School says that's all over. Copy has to be changed continually now. They also say—and I suggest that copy writers listen carefully to what they say, since each of their advertisements is checked carefully by returns and they know exactly what they're talking about—that during the 1920's illustrations were an important part of each ad. Today, many of their advertisements contain no picture at all. "The prospects are more interested in what we can do for them, not in pictures and layout." The old emotional copy which used to pay has had to give way to hard-hitting factual copy, aiming at the intelligence. Before 1929, a successful ad showed a man and his wife, headed, "Mary, I owe it all to you!" That wouldn't go any longer. They say, and this is another tip for advertising people, that they do not consider that a full-page advertisement is pro-

portionately more effective than smaller space. We never found it so in the old mail order book business. We almost never used full pages. We got proportionately more results from smaller space.¹

¹ "Change in Retail Attitude," by Paul V. Barrett of International Correspondence Schools, in *Printers' Ink*, May, 1936.

20. INSTITUTIONAL

TO an advertising agency, the candy in the Christmas stocking, the brandy on the plum pudding, is Institutional Advertising. It's easy to sell to the client, it's child's play to write, and it makes everyone feel fine—unless the returns fail to come in. And then another agency gets the account.

What then is this lovely kind of advertising? It's the kind which doesn't say anything about the product at all. Sometimes it tells about the concern and its history; sometimes it talks only about cabbages and kings. Sometimes it's brilliant; sometimes it's merely brilliant nonsense. Sometimes the advertiser gets more business out of it, and sometimes he doesn't expect to get any business but uses it for a different purpose, like scaring a legislature or pleasing a newspaper.

The word *Institutional* stands in the advertising business for the loveliest velvet there is. It has nothing to do with orphan asylums; and as understood here it is far too sensible for insane asylums.

When an advertiser like the H. J. Heinz Company makes a line of products and advertises their general excellence, that is not really institutional advertising.

In the beginning, institutional advertising was merely an idea you got up when the advertiser had a particularly conceited president or owner, and you showed a campaign which neglected the product but had a big photograph of the conceited head. Many an account was and is got that

way. Or else you showed a dreary picture of the factory, made to look longer and wider than life. Or else you advertised your reputation, as when the Bell Telephone System tells the history of the growth in the army of telephone users. All this is obvious enough.

A big step ahead is the remarkable advertising done by Parke, Davis & Company. This concern sells little directly to the public. They have a few items like mouthwash and toothpaste, but you never hear of them. Their business is in high-class drugs. Only rarely does a customer ask for a Parke-Davis product. Why, then, the advertising in magazines read by the consumer? Quite simply—to hold the goodwill of the doctor and the druggist, and especially to fight cut-rate drugstores. So Parke, Davis showed how the old-fashioned druggist was more than just a salesman for patent medicine. And for the doctor, “In the next twelve months, 18,000 American homes will be thrown into mourning by appendicitis. . . . Call your physician at once.” When you read this honest advertising copy, you can’t help thinking pretty well of Parke-Davis products. When they show you a drugstore in the rough mining beginnings of Helena, Montana, in 1865, and tell how hard a pharmacist has to work and how seldom he grows rich, then, too, you think better of Parke, Davis & Company. You don’t ask for Parke-Davis products because you don’t know what they are. But the druggist, the doctor, and the nurse will ask for them. I doubt if this advertising brought any immediate increase in sales. But it helped build up and hold a reputation.

Squibb’s was much more startling. This was the \$700,000 spent on World Peaceways or “Penny for Peace” Campaign

to keep America out of war. Squibb's contributed one cent of the price of each Squibb item to this campaign.

I am told the World Peaceways Campaign failed completely to increase the sale of Squibb products. While the advertising was running, there was an underground whispering campaign to make advertisers boycott magazines that carried the Peaceways advertising. The talk was that "Communists are putting it over on the world." All this whispering got nowhere. Squibbs gained widely in public respect.

The Metropolitan Life Insurance Company was the first big institutional advertiser. It began in 1909 and has been keeping up ever since. The idea was to educate the public about health, both public and private. Between 1909 and 1929 the company spent \$32,000,000. Of course, this fortune wasn't for love of humanity. They figured shrewdly that by teaching the public they would increase the life span and so get more policy payments. And apparently they were right. Between 1911 and 1929 they saved \$75,000,000 in death payments.¹

J. E. D. Benedict, advertising manager of Metropolitan Life, says that they have got millions of letters from these ads. Agents sent in enthusiastic letters giving the names of people to whom they sold insurance directly as a result of specific advertisements. "Some of them [the results] are intangible, and these, by far, are the most significant. No one can estimate to what extent the institutional advertising has improved American health."

The highest return from one piece of copy (on swimming and life-saving) was more than 80,000 coupons. The lowest was 14 (on rectal cancer), but officials of the company con-

¹ Frank LeRoy Blanchard, *The Adcrafter*.

sidered it one of the best because the replies were from reputable physicians, whom it addressed over the heads of ordinary readers. This ad contained no coupon or booklet offer.

This is the best kind of advertising, institutional or otherwise. It is able, it is sensible, it is decent, and it is not opposed to public policy. Besides, it has news value. Here is one of the Metropolitan Life ads:

MANY CANCERS ARE CURABLE

Medical experts state that many cancers can be cured if discovered and treated in time—but time is the all-important element.

Cancer in its early stages can often be destroyed by radium and X-rays, or removed by surgery. An increasing number of cases are being discovered early and the technique in successfully removing or destroying these cancers is steadily advancing. Full recoveries have been made in thousands of reported cases in which patients were on the alert and sought early, competent treatment.

Physicians warn against neglected conditions which are known to precede the onset of cancer—lumps, unusual discharges, wounds that will not heal, moles and warts that change in size and color, or other abnormal conditions. Continued irritation of any part of the body is often the beginning of trouble.

If your family doctor finds a suspicious condition he presumably will not pass judgment as to whether or not it is cancer until he can get complete scientific confirmation.

Many people who fear they have cancer are worrying without cause. A complete physical check-up which shows there is nothing wrong is a very comforting assurance. Thorough and competent periodic physical examinations may help doctors to discover cases of cancer while there is still time for successful treatment. Should suspicious symptoms appear at any time, see your doctor at once.

The Metropolitan will gladly send you its free leaflet on cancer, "A Message of Hope." Address Booklet Department 137-S.

Keep Healthy—Be Examined Regularly

There is no real difference in policy toward employees and policy-holders between Metropolitan Life and Prudential Life. But in foresight, the difference in acumen is tremendous. While Metropolitan was doing this advertising, Prudential plugged away at its old Rock of Gibraltar, which disappointed Americans who at the entrance to the Mediterranean found a hill covered with houses instead of the grim Prudential rock. But, naturally, Prudential and all other life insurance companies benefit from the Metropolitan advertising. That is one of the aspects of this sort of institutional advertising. It benefits everybody in the trade. Parke, Davis, for instance, helped doctors, nurses and druggists and everything they sold, except patent medicines.

But the big new honeypot for advertisers is called by the trade Public Relations Advertising. This is the sort of institutional advertising which is done by General Motors, U. S. Steel, Dupont, Goodyear, Aluminum, General Electric, International Business Machines. The fundamental idea is to defeat specific legislation, to fight a political party, or to win public opinion. Running through most of it is the Nazi idea—the notion that "What's good for us is good for you," and "You should be willing to make sacrifices for the good of industry." It is all part of a general determination to sell business and business social theories to the public. General Motors was the most ambitious with its *leit-motif*, "Who serves progress serves America." Another pet theme is "Prosperity reigns where harmony dwells." This was aimed at such inharmonious people as strikers and leg-

islatures. It sounds fine too. Only, unfortunately, it is completely contradicted by history. Miriam Beard proves in her book, *History of the Business Man*, that business and industry flourish on lack of harmony.

General Motors makes Buick, Cadillac, Chevrolet, and other cars, and each of these is advertised separately with a regular sales talk. It also controls Fisher Body. Over all of them run General Motors institutional campaigns—the concerts over the radio, the lessons in safe driving.

From 1923 to 1929 General Motors institutional advertising rather forgot the automobile and set out to sell stock. This was addressed to the investing public, not to the car buyer. You read how the number of General Motors stockholders had increased, how many employees it had, and other such handsome facts.

In 1933 the advertising changed, and after feeling around for a year or two it rose to a much cleverer idea. Calling itself a “public-minded institution,” General Motors set out to get goodwill from social organizations and civic and state authorities by safety appeals and warnings against reckless driving. With these went really excellent safety talks over the radio, later put into a booklet called “We Drivers.” Four million of “We Drivers” have been distributed.

During the General Motors strike in 1936-37 all its advertising in newspapers and magazines and all its national radio programs were canceled, except for a full-page ad of President Sloan’s statement to employees. Their only other strike advertising ran in the official American Federation of Labor organ. That, says *Tide* (June 1, 1937), was “the independent advertising of the Anti-union Plant alliances composed of loyal General Motors executives and employees.” *Tide* quite simply accepted the idea that this was

a company union and that General Motors paid for its advertising. It looks as though only the courts have any doubt about who's back of company unions. But the courts always seem to know much less than the public. Such public relations advertising is often also run by advertising agencies or by magazines like *Fortune* and *The Nation's Business*. They do it to please the manufacturers and also because they believe in it.

The newspapers like it, too. In 1937, the American Newspaper Publishers Association sent out a circular in lovely shades of black and blue and terra cotta in which it calls institutional advertising "copy that is directed at new conditions." "Some of this copy," they say, "recognizes a popular discontent with our social and economic position—a discontent which has been fomented and kept alive by many vocal forces, varying all the way from sincere rabble-rousers to plain demagogues. It is born of opposition and seeks to meet unjust attacks. It admits that business has been too long silent and is therefore to be blamed for the public ignorance upon which soapbox orators and rabble-rousers thrive."

What do all those fine words mean? They mean that this copy is usually directed against labor and against new laws that manufacturers don't like. The circular shows some ads as samples. Remington-Rand tells how the strikers in its factories are all wrong. The Kansas Gas & Electric Company ad-says that the cost of government is going up faster than the cost of living. The Spreckels Sugar Company has a nice official shaking hands with a handsome farmer. United States Steel shows beautifully a courageous workman looking as fine as any out of Russia. The Commonwealth and Southern Corporation attacks the Wheeler-Rayburn bill.

Now don't you think that this is a nice, neat way to fight new legislation? And even a nicer, smoother way to fight labor unions? Because that is the big, new idea in advertising. It is a great idea for the advertising business, I want to tell you. "Take the money from the Surplus Profits Tax," the agency says to the client. "Either you pay it to the government or you spend it, and now you can spend it in advertising and tell the public what they're doing to you in Washington, what the labor unions are doing to you. And besides, while you're about it, the public sees your name over dignified copy and knows your product is good. Must be good, or you wouldn't be talking such fine big generalities."

Or taking off the gloves, why give this money to the government? Let's show these labor agitators where they get off. Let's fix up Lewis. Let's turn the heat on Congress.

It is put suavely by N. W. Ayer & Son in an ad in *Fortune*, December, 1936. Here are little pieces of it. Every word of this is worth reading. I wish we had room for the whole advertisement.

WE MAKE A PREDICTION

The most serious problem confronting American Industry for the next ten years will not be sales.

It will not be production.

It will not be capital or credit.

It will be the problem of public goodwill and friendship . . . of protecting, against organized attack, the fruits of our restored prosperity and well-being. . . .

For the past six years, American Industry has been engaged in a war. It isn't a very big war . . . yet. Lots of businessmen don't even realize it's going on. But it is going on . . . and it will go on . . . until one side or the other wins.

The enemy in this war is the small radical minority in the United States. Small . . . but aggressive. Small . . . but clever. Small . . . but growing. It is an enemy with a fixed and fanatic purpose which few businessmen can credit or understand.

That purpose is nothing less than the complete destruction and dissolution of our entire industrial system.

Make no mistake about it, this enemy is . . . intelligent. It is well educated. . . . It is trying to align the public against Industry . . . to convince the people of this country that their interests and the interests of American business are not the same.

If the day ever comes when they succeed in planting that conviction . . . or even a reasonable doubt . . . in the minds of a majority of our people, that day will be a dark one for American business.

For 67 years this House has been dealing at first-hand with the public. It is our business to know people and to know what is going on. We know that it is human nature to believe anything if you hear it often enough. And we know that the public is hearing the radical story. . . .

The time has come for American business to fight back. It is being misrepresented and maligned. . . .

Therefore, to the heads of America's leading businesses, we say this: The way to do this job is by the right sort of advertising. . . . *The message conveyed . . . the portrait painted . . . by American advertising during the next ten years will determine the fate of American business for fifty years to come.*

Doremus and Company, another advertising agency, puts it much more simply: ¹

Will it do the chain stores any good to offer even greater values? Not at all. Those women, motivated by prejudices, won't do business with them at any price. Can they be won back? Of course they can. But not by product advertising alone.

You see people demanding that utility companies reduce electric rates that are already low. Why? Because someone told

¹ *Advertising & Selling*, mid-February, 1938.

them that utility companies are greedy monopolies that make too much money.

You see people refusing to buy a make of automobile that they really want. Why? Because they have been told that the company's employees are turned into overworked automatons and discarded like scrap-iron when they grow old.

You see other people refusing to buy at certain department stores . . . because someone told them that the sales clerks were paid starvation wages.

But the most overwhelming of these agency advertisements is one that has become a classic in the business, Erwin Wasey & Company's "The Old Man." A full page in the *New York Times*, it made such a sensation that it has been reprinted free by newspapers all over the country. It has no doubt brought plenty of business to the agency.

"The Old Man" is the boss of a factory. He sits at his desk, eating a raw apple, a bottle of milk, and some crackers. That's his lunch, poor dear Spartan. Through the window he sees "a swarthy little man with a black mustache—the professional agitator." The papers had published the "Old Man's" salary the day before. His income ran into six figures. The "swarthy little agitator with the black mustache" is yelling "Soak the rich" and "Down with capital." And what do you suppose is worrying the "Old Man" as he sits at his acidulous lunch? Well, what he's worried about is that the son of the foreman and other fine young men are going to miss the opportunity that he had. He thinks of the humble cabin he was born in and compares "this America of ours" with "all the polyglot nations of the earth." This is a nice point, since we're probably the most polyglot nation in the world. But never mind—you get the idea. The boss makes \$800,000 a year and eats an apple and a glass of milk. The agitator has a black mustache.

And for these reasons the son of the foreman isn't going to be able to get rich and eat an apple and crackers for lunch and dream of his humble origin.

The Bethlehem Steel Company seems to agree enthusiastically with the policies of public relations advertising. It ought to. Bethlehem spent millions of dollars to tell the public how fine it was for this country to have its armor-plate privately manufactured. This "institutional" message appeared in 3,257 publications at a time when it looked as though we might have a nationally owned armor plant. The message went over big.¹

Dupont no doubt likes it too. This company had heavy public relations campaigns to justify its big profits and big growth. One of these was designed to show the importance of chemistry in daily life. An especially astute one runs in college papers to influence youth and to get young people to become chemists. Too many are already chemists out of jobs. But the more chemists out of jobs, the lower the wages.

The biggest institutional advertisers were the big utilities. They spend millions and their copy doesn't sound as though they were trying to get more users of electricity or gas or more riders on the streetcars.

In *Freedom of the Press*, George Seldes says that the power interests divided the United States into twenty-eight districts. "The parent association was called NELA—National Electric Light Association. The money to corrupt the public mind was taken from the public. M. H. Aylesworth, managing director of the NELA, addressing a public relations conference, said: 'All the money being spent is

¹ George Seldes, *Freedom of the Press*.

worth while. . . . Don't be afraid of the expense. The public pays the expense.'

"With the Hearst and Scripps-Howard press the public utilities could do nothing: they realized that advertising in these fifty newspapers was purely advertising and would not get them very far." No doubt they found many other papers besides these two groups that wouldn't play, "but with thousands of newspapers the case was different. Here it was purely a matter of money. If you paid the owners of the press they favored private ownership."

The power people themselves accused many newspapers of using blackmail and demanding bribery. Some of the papers "knew something" about a politician and some got excited about high rates for power and started a campaign "for the benefit of the common people." Then when the power company added a paper to its advertising list, its opposition stopped. Most of this, according to James Rorty, went to smaller newspapers.

Mr. Seldes says that in Missouri the utilities claimed that they got their propaganda into 699 newspapers, failing only in the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*. In Georgia, only 4 out of 250 newspapers favored public ownership. Only 4 in Alabama held out against utility advertising. In North and South Carolina, the *Raleigh News and Observer* was the only paper among 300 that was unfriendly to power propaganda.

This sort of advertising is pleasantly known as goodwill advertising. In several states legislatures without any goodwill have passed laws against it, considering it, not goodwill, but propaganda.

Until 1935 United States Steel had never advertised to the public. Before the 1936 election they, too, felt they had

to bite off a couple of pieces of Public Relations lollipop. In 1936 Batten, Barton, Durstine & Osborn spent \$712,712 for U. S. Steel in magazines, farm papers and radio to fight Roosevelt. Learning nothing from that failure, the Steel Corporation tried again. This second splurge seemed to the naïve reader pointless to the edge of idiocy. Why should the Steel Corporation take two big pages in the *Saturday Evening Post*, price \$23,000 per insertion, to show a curly-headed child in a train window calling out, "Bye, Grandma, don't you worry." Why should U. S. Steel show a pretty picture of another bright little boy in overalls looking up at a kindly storekeeper and saying, "My dad wants a pound of nails." And why show three little Tom Sawyers building a rough cabin and yelling into a make-believe telephone, "Some nails and a load of pipe—and make it snappy"? All that was missing from this warm bath of charm were a cute roly-poly puppy, a lamb, some pink roses, and a spray of appleblossoms. Then another, oddest of all, "Remember what gas used to cost when that car was new?" The beautiful little children are left out of this advertisement. Only a homely, nice, old-fashioned farmer and a snappy new garage attendant. But why?—U. S. Steel doesn't sell gas.

All right, why should a bright outfit like the Steel Corporation pay out money for these remote and unconnected ads? Why should it advertise to the consumer at all? Certainly the consumer doesn't care whether the Steel Corporation makes the nails he buys once every other year. Nor does he care who makes the train he rides on. *Sales Management*, an advertising trade periodical, says that competition was the answer. There had been a merger of \$350,000,000 of steel manufacturers of the Middle West into the Republic Corporation. U. S. Steel had to compete with

Bethlehem and Republic. So U. S. Steel would spend \$11,500 a page in the *Saturday Evening Post* to make sure that you buy your ten-cent package of nails from U. S. Steel and not from Bethlehem or Republic. In case this answer seems to you not quite satisfactory, I should like to point out that by the oddest of coincidences, this campaign happened to come out just before the beginning of the steel strike.

Did the Steel Corporation expect to win working people by these pictures of idealized workmen, old-fashioned dealers and clean-faced children? I hardly think so. You don't advertise in the *Saturday Evening Post* to reach an exclusive audience of factory employees. More likely Steel was trying to soften the picture of itself in the eyes of the middle classes who had always regarded it as the wolf in the stock market. Maybe that was their idea and maybe I'm all wrong.

The methods of the businessmen of Seattle are more direct. During the longshoremen's strike they used large space in local newspapers to fight the strikers. "This advertising," said the general manager of the Chamber of Commerce, "laid the foundation in the public mind for forceful measures."¹ On an even lower level are communities, like Los Angeles, which put emphasis on their "contented open-shop labor."

States also do institutional advertising, but of a better type. In 1936 Pennsylvania spent about a hundred thousand dollars to "lessen the massacre on the highways." All cars in the state have to pass a mechanical inspection before they can use the roads, and a special seal is put on the

¹ *Partners in Plunder.*

OK'd cars. The advertising is paid for from the sale of these seals.

The state of Idaho passed a special bill to tax potato growers one cent per hundredweight of all potatoes in the state, the proceeds to advertise Idaho potatoes in the national markets. Maine did a similar job for its potatoes and various other farm products in 1936.

Campaigns like these are a great satisfaction to the advertising agency because they leave the conscience clear.

Some institutional advertising then is dangerous, some is able, but much of it is foolish. One of the funny ones is a campaign run by the Republican National Committee with comment by *Printers' Ink*. Here's one of the ads:

Imagine there were only two men in the U. S. from which [sic] to select—

LONDON OR ROOSEVELT—Which would you hire to fill these jobs?

Job No. 1—Radio talker—which has the most pleasing, smooth-sounding voice?

Job No. 5—Boss for your son—who would teach your son the elements of thrift and guide him to a useful career?

Job No. 7—Adviser to you—if you want practical advice from one who has had practical experience, to which would you go?

The answers came in enthusiastically for Landon. *Printers' Ink*, writing before the Election, was pleased with the "startling pulling power" of this advertising. They could not guess that Roosevelt would be re-elected, so they demanded: "Has the Republican National Committee touched a vein of current popular psychology that copy writers have been too frequently ignoring?"¹ We don't

¹ *Printers' Ink*, October 15, 1936.

know the answer to that. All we know is that Roosevelt won.

But it isn't only the employer who has been using public relations advertising. Labor unions have also done a little. In the *New York Post* there were three or four full-page advertisements of various labor unions, one of the United Mine Workers of America, and one of the International Ladies' Garment Workers' Union. These were well illustrated. They could have been better written, and the type effects could have been better, but they were along the right lines, and they told their story pretty well.

If the labor unions wish to impress the general public, they can hardly find a better way than through advertising, and if cleverly managed it need not cost very much in tactically chosen newspapers. It is far more effective . . . provided they have the money, than mass meetings, or than any amount of pamphlets.

The public believes that newspaper and magazine advertising has more "class" than leaflets or speeches. The mere fact that a labor union advertised in high-class papers would bring it some consumer respect—if only because the consumer would know that the union must have the money to pay for the display. Thus the labor union, in the mind of the average fellow, would be as well dressed as the manufacturer, and that to the average fellow means plenty. But even if labor union officials were convinced, such a campaign would be hard to organize. It is a difficult job to raise money for any co-operative advertising effort. And it is sometimes even harder to get the co-operators to agree on what they want to say when the advertising is done. But if someone could put through the fearful job of getting the labor unions in line, of convincing first officers and then

rank and file of the importance of advertising, it could be a tremendous weapon.

But while advertising to influence the public is still going on, many big businessmen have lost faith in it. The failure of the campaign against Roosevelt dealt it a sharp blow. Certain of the biggest industrialists recognize it as a sort of racket which is costing them money and getting them nowhere, so they are substituting a plan which seems to be more fundamental. It has always been a good principle to have something behind your advertising besides words. This new plan is pleasantly called "Co-ordination of the Industry." General Motors has worked it out in detail. Briefly, the idea of General Motors is to get everybody in the organization from top to bottom working to put a good picture before the public. For this purpose they have organized councils among their dealers; also forty-two General Motors Clubs "to develop a more intimate association among all those who are supporting the General Motors flag." The language shows a naïve confusion between business and patriotism.

Along this line also is the decentralization of the industry. Branch factories make bottleneck strikes more difficult and local administrations can be handled more easily. Also, the cities with new plants are likely to be grateful for the money they bring in.

Under this program local public relations committees, appointed by General Motors, sponsor luncheons, join proper organizations, do the sort of things which are told about in the chapter *How to Swing an Election*. In other words, in place of senseless ads like those of U. S. Steel, there is a thorough and complete policy of undercover

work. In addition, General Motors' usual institutional advertising will probably be continued over radio, newspaper, and magazine. General Motors is by no means the only one working on such campaigns. The United States Chamber of Commerce is instructing its members so they can proceed along the same lines.¹

¹ "Business Finds Its Voice," by S. H. Walker and Paul Sklar, in *Harper's Magazine*, March, 1938.

21. FREE SPACE

WHY do we talk with such round-eyed surprise about the influence of advertising? Who supports the magazines? Who supports the newspapers? Who supports the radio? You, with the two or three cents a day you spend for your newspaper, or the five cents you pay for your weekly, or the nothing you pay to the radio chains? Of course not!

Take the *Saturday Evening Post*. In 1937 it carried 1,880,932 lines of advertising. At \$8,000¹ a page this comes to \$26,575,599 for the year. Let's say its net revenue from subscribers was about \$4,000,000. Magazine circulation men would consider that too high because a popular periodical pays out so much in agents' commissions, newsstand discounts, and advertising to get subscribers. Suppose we put the figure at \$4,000,000. Do you see any reason why a concern that is in business to make money should consider that four million more important than the twenty-six and a half million from advertisers?

In one issue, that of October 30, 1937, the *Saturday Evening Post* carried nearly one million dollars' worth of advertising (\$938,850). Of a total of 78¾ pages, 60⅛ were for automobiles and accessories. 18⅝ were devoted to other products. In most issues there would not be such a disproportion, though the amount of automobile advertising would always be large. This was a special automobile issue

¹ \$11,500 in four colors.

that came out at the time of the big fall shows. Roughly, then, one issue contained \$720,222 worth of automobile advertising. During the whole of that year the *Saturday Evening Post* carried \$9,780,150 of automobile space. Can you point out to me any reason within the frame of commercial logic why the *Saturday Evening Post* should love the C.I.O.?

If these figures mean anything, the *Saturday Evening Post* is really in the advertising business with a little publishing business on the side.

As a money-making concern, the *Saturday Evening Post* would be crazy to consider the public first. To be sure, it's got to keep its three million readers in mind. If the readers went, the advertising would also go. The magazine has got to please the readers. It can't live without the advertising, which in turn can't live without the readers. But you can say a great deal that will please advertisers without annoying your readers. The three million people who invest five cents a copy won't know if you leave out something here and there, something that advertisers might object to.

The reader of the *Saturday Evening Post* thinks he's getting a lot for his money, and, as far as quantity is concerned, he is. He gets a big five cents' worth—a lot of stories, a lot of pictures, a lot of shining paper and nice clean type. Without the advertising, the *Saturday Evening Post* couldn't pay sixty thousand dollars for a serial. Maybe the serial is worth about sixty cents to you instead of sixty thousand dollars. But the reader likes it. You may be sure he does or he wouldn't buy the magazine. There is no law compelling anybody to read the *Saturday Evening Post*. It fills a tremendous need for diversion. I doubt if anybody takes its editorials seriously, but its articles full of facts are

enormously popular, even if the facts are sometimes fiction.

But do not forget that even if the *Saturday Evening Post* didn't carry a line of automobile advertising it still wouldn't love the C.I.O. The owners of such a periodical are themselves capitalists. Advertising does not stand off by itself as an independent activity. It is part of the general social pattern by which we live. The *Saturday Evening Post* sincerely believes that it is right, and that its advertisers are right. The editor is not expressing reactionary opinions merely to please the advertiser.

The *Saturday Evening Post* isn't chosen here because it is singular in its attitude, but because it has the largest circulation of any magazine. Everything that is said about it would be equally true of dozens of magazines.

Albert D. Lasker, former head of Lord & Thomas, is merely making himself ridiculous when he blusters: ¹

No more vicious calumny has ever been put forth than the suspicion that the press, in any major or important way, can be influenced editorially by its advertising patrons.

Henry R. Luce, publisher of *Time*, *Life*, and *Fortune*, was much franker and more sensible. Talking to a convention of the American Association of Advertising Agencies, he urged ad-men to learn "how to advertise without jeopardizing the true standards of journalism"—that dictatorships are "unspeakable" because "they corrupt the mind from within" by suppressing the truth. "They lead men by lies and fraud to desire and acquiesce in their own enslavement." And then, to get to the point, ". . . the fate of Western civilization can be influenced by the individual and collective behavior of American advertisers in the next

¹ *Freedom of the Press*, by George Seldes.

ten years." "I am here because you are the only court in the land to whom I am accountable for the sum total of my acts as an editor and a publisher."¹

I ask that you shall appropriate over the next ten critical years no less than \$100,000,000 * for the publication of a magazine called *Life*. We will keep hammering on your doors asking for the money week after week. If you give it, there will be *Life*. If you do not, there will be no *Life*.

(* Only magazines achieving \$10,000,000 of advertising revenue in 1936: *Saturday Evening Post*, \$26,311,233; *Collier's*, \$11,351,295. Total magazine advertising, \$143,790,669, of which *Luceweekly Time* took \$7,163,964, *Luce monthly Fortune* \$1,962,956.—Figures by Publishers Information Bureau.)²

The story of most newspaper income is not so topsyturvy as that of the bigger magazines, but even they get three times as much money from advertisers as they do from subscribers. Some of the biggest money-makers, like the *New York Sun*, *Los Angeles Times*, *New York Times*, get an even larger proportion.³

Most advertising men act frankly as though they own the periodicals and they express an honest indignation when a paper prints something they don't like. Biting the hand that feeds them, they say.

Time was when publishers were editors who endeavored to mold the opinion of their readers along this line or that . . . but nowadays the real publishers are the advertisers, since their

¹ *Editor & Publisher*, May 8, 1937.

² *Op cit.*

³ "Until 1890," say J. B. Matthews and R. E. Shallcross in *Partners in Plunder*, "subscriptions and sales accounted for more than half the total revenues of all newspapers. Today, about 75 per cent of all newspaper income is derived from advertising and only about 25 per cent from sales and subscriptions."

financial support of a publication is in most cases all that keeps it alive.¹

The more you examine the set-up the more astonishing it is that the press, the magazines, the radio, have any independence whatsoever. You'd expect that the advertisers would completely rule all publications. Under the weight of the two and a half billion dollars they spend, isn't it surprising that we get such coverage of labor news as that in the *New York Times*, such independence as that of the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, such fastidiousness as that of the *New Yorker*, and such insolence as that shown occasionally by *Time*? The *New York Post* not long ago had an ad of five columns advertising the first issue of *Life* and on the page opposite had an editorial making fun of *Life*. It would be hard to overestimate the courage needed by a publication when it tells a truth which an advertiser won't like.

I often disagree with the opinions expressed in the *New York Times Book Review*. I don't like its point of view, but I respect it because I know that if a book advertiser should write to the editor asking for a friendly review of a book or for any special favor, the result might be disastrous for the advertiser at the worst, or nothing at the best.

But the advertisers have done plenty to the newspapers. The story has been told by Upton Sinclair in *The Brass Check*, by George Seldes in *Freedom of the Press*, by Stephen Raushenbush, by reports of Congressional investigations, by articles in liberal magazines, by *Collier's Weekly*, by the better newspapers. The patent medicine crowd did a big job. The Proprietary Association of America spends

¹ George Frank Lord, at that time advertising manager of the Dupont interests.—From *Freedom of the Press*.

about \$40,000,000 a year in newspaper advertising. It worked in the background as the organized newspaper associations fought and defeated the original Tugwell bill. The patent medicine people were crude about it. They made the newspapers sign a special contract. William Allen White refused the advertising for the *Emporia Gazette* and gave the contract to *Collier's* for publication. One paragraph of it read:

It is mutually agreed that this contract is void if any law is enacted by your State restricting or prohibiting the manufacture or sale of proprietary medicines.¹

Many newspapers refused to sign, and it cost them money. The *Cleveland Press*, for example, was one of those, and in forty-eight hours got six cancellations and altogether lost \$18,000 worth of advertising.²

The Proprietary Association lacked manners. After all, why put a mean little paragraph like that down on paper? The gentlemanly way to do is to have a jolly little talk with the advertising manager of the paper and then everybody's face can be saved. The utilities and power people managed the thing much better without so much written fuss, and with just as good results.

The women's pages, the automobile sections, travel sections, and real estate sections are run on the "co-operative" plan, co-operative with the advertiser. Many of the women's pages in the newspapers are really nothing but pasted-up stuff from advertisers, though there are some columns as bold and free as that of Dorothy Dunbar Bromley of the *New York Post*.

¹ From *Freedom of the Press*.

² *Op. cit.*

It seems to me that the most naïve reader could tell at a glance that nearly all the news stuff on the travel, resort, and real estate pages is advertising publicity. I never heard of anyone who read any of it, but perhaps there are people so famished for pap. And people do read the automobile sections. They probably wouldn't if they knew how some of the automobile advertising is placed. During the automobile show in any city, advertising is given out on a day-to-day basis of free space. The advertising manager of each car or truck has on his desk the clippings of yesterday's automobile news pages. When the solicitor for a newspaper comes to see him, he measures up yesterday's free space and exactly according to that gives out today's orders for advertising.

The New York *Daily Mirror* is a sort of caricature of what advertising can do when it gets a free hand. In a hearing before the National Labor Relations Board,¹ testimony showed that the music critic got a salary and a 10 per cent commission on the advertising he obtained, the authors of columns dealing with amusements and food were paid by the advertising department, the beauty column praised the advertisers' goods, the re-write man prepared blurbs for department stores, the steamship man made up his column from publicity notes. That still left Walter Winchell, who would be more popular with the big fellows if he would play along with advertisers. I am sure the *Mirror* was astonished by the fuss made by the testimony over these special departments. After all, they had merely considered them as Service to the advertiser.

¹ Hearing before the N.L.R.B., December, 1937.

Nice word—Service. It covers a good many things that you as a customer might not like.

But on the whole, I should say that the newspapers are more independent than the magazines, and for good reasons. Big magazines are more closely organized than big newspapers. The advertising department is closer to the editorial department. There is more time to plan. Because of the hurry of the daily issue, there is a certain amount of confusion on a newspaper, and because of that confusion, more individuality. A columnist writing in one department doesn't know what an advertiser is saying in another, and often doesn't care. He knows that Service is just another word for free publicity, and he doesn't want to co-operate with the advertiser if he can help it. After all, his name is signed to his column.

When you read in your newspaper or your magazine a good word for any advertised product, whether it is a five-cent cake of soap or a five-thousand-dollar automobile, look at it with a sharp and suspicious eye. It may be true—often it is—but it is not put there because it is of value to you. It goes in as part of the Service to the advertiser.

What is this Service to the advertiser, or, even more pleasantly, Co-operation with the advertiser? Let's not take a hypothetical case, let's take a real one.

Years ago I handled the advertising of Quaker Lace Curtains. Some of the curtains were made of plain nets and some had elaborate borders. These curtains, especially the ones with elaborate borders, were not in fashion. We advertised them in a number of women's magazines and we got plenty of Co-operation. The editors asked us for photographs of rooms with windows draped with our curtains. Often Quaker Lace wasn't mentioned in the article, but

under the photograph were the words, "Shown by courtesy of the Quaker Lace Company." This was good enough. Even better were the photographs which were captioned "New Window Trimmings with Quaker Lace Curtains." Though our type of curtain wasn't fashionable, we got plenty of free articles pointing them out as the newest thing in interior decoration. Quaker Lace was a small account, simply Lilliputian compared to the giants. Yet we expected a good deal of Service and we never had to be demanding or disagreeable to get it. It was given to us eagerly and with courtesy. Of course, the advertising solicitor never could promise that he was going to give us the free space. He'd say, "You know how our editors are . . . upstage. Better not give me the stuff. Why don't you take the household editor to lunch? I'll fix it up for you."

When we were advertising Primrose House creams and lotions, it was both easier and harder. It was easier because the beauty departments of the magazines were famished for novelty. Still, it is odd how many new twists you can give to an old story. And it was harder because we were in competition with so many other beauty products. This time it would be the fashion editor or the beauty editor whom we took out to lunch; we would send her a package of the goods. We always dealt directly with her and spoke as though we weren't advertisers at all. This was merely a bit of good manners. It would have been terribly rude of us to hand the stuff to her through the advertising manager. She would have been offended, and we might have failed to get any mention at all. You can imagine how indignant we would have been if one of these magazines had come out with an article advising women that soap and water were better than creams. Naturally, we knew there would

be some mention of soap and water. There were plenty of soap advertisers, and you can't be a hog and get everything. They expected their share, and we expected ours.

These special departments do mention products which are not advertised. Many of the editors, anxious as they are to hold their jobs, feel a special delight when they can find an unadvertised product and give it a boost. For instance, in the *Herald Tribune* household page every morning you will find one or two or even three bits about advertised products. The name isn't mentioned but "If you will telephone —, you can get the name of this product." But this editor also digs up many unknown places and unknown and unadvertised products which have been of help to her readers.

Elizabeth Hawes, in *Fashion Is Spinach*, sympathizes with the fashion editors:

The life of the ladies who work on the editorial boards of fashion magazines is in my estimation a most unpleasant one. They would prefer to fill up the magazines with things which they want to show the public because they think the dresses are pretty or chic or smart or whatever it is they like. Although they are ostensibly hired to do just this, they are seldom allowed to. . . . [The *New Yorker*] is the only magazine I ever saw which had the guts to let the fashion reporters speak their minds.

Also in the *New Yorker* there is a department called "Markets." It is a rule of this column that no advertised product shall ever be mentioned. But the *New Yorker* is exceptional. The rule runs the other way.

The general weeklies and monthlies cannot give advertisers as much help as do the women's magazines. They do not have the service departments which fit in so well

with the "co-operative" scheme. The women's magazines are perfect for the purpose. They are really trade journals for housewives. Millions of women plan their meals and buy their products from the advice given in departments on cooking, baby feeding, beauty, dressmaking, building, decorating. It is in this direct advice that the advertiser can be so easily helped.

If we got so much help for a comparatively small account like Primrose House, can you imagine the "consideration" that would be given to a cosmetic that spends millions of dollars?

The Frank Presbrey Agency years ago, when I was working there, used to advertise Nestlé's Food. This is a powdered milk. The instructions on the package now say that it is to be mixed with milk, but at that time it was supposed to be mixed only with water. One month, to our dismay, the *Ladies' Home Journal* ran an article saying that no powdered baby food was any good unless it was mixed with milk. Well, the Frank Presbrey Company wrote a letter. And soon the *Ladies' Home Journal* ran another article saying that powdered baby foods mixed with water were all right. Perhaps they had merely changed their minds, perhaps they had learned a good deal that they hadn't known before. Or perhaps it was something else.

The *Woman's Home Companion* cleverly calls this Service—Pre-Selling. To advertisers and advertising agencies, they sent an expensive circular explaining how Pre-Selling helped the advertiser along. The circular was attractive, with a chubby baby on the lovely blue cover, all wrapped in clear cellophane. What then is Pre-Selling? Pre-Selling means getting the reader in the right mood to buy the products advertised. On the left-hand side in each page of

this circular is an ad from the *Woman's Home Companion*; on the right-hand page is an article from the magazine. First an advertisement for Squibb's Dental Cream, showing a nice baby. Opposite, the article which also shows a baby, and is headed, "Give Your Teeth a Chance." The advertisement is dignified and the article, while it tells nothing new, does no harm. In the next pair of pages, Hind's Honey and Almond Cream has a rather confusing ad in which love, laundry, and hand-kissing all get mixed up together. Opposite is the editorial piece, "What Should I Do with My Hands?" A page ad of Ovaltine shows a little girl saying, "I don't want to eat," while the article called "A Child and His Food" shows a little boy who doesn't want to eat. Very impressive. The article is by a physician and the ad has X-ray pictures of a stomach. The physician says nothing special, but the ad claims generously that Ovaltine increases appetite, helps starches to digest more quickly, and makes milk more digestible.

"What," asks this circular, "do most advertisers do before they sell a specific brand?" "They sell with illustration, with headline, with lead-in copy." And what does the *Woman's Home Companion* do editorially? The circular says, "The editorial pages of women's magazines do the very same thing, they discuss products, stimulate wants, prepare the market for brand-selling." This might be a perfectly innocent statement if it weren't for the one word "brand-selling." They do not say that they are trying to build up desires and wants "to raise the standard of living" by recommending good products, but that the "editorial pages of the women's magazines prepare the market for brand-selling"—not for sugar loose out of a barrel, but sugar with a brand name on it; not for coffee fresh ground by your

grocer, but coffee in a can with a brand name; not for a good carpet, but for a branded carpet. And they speak not only for the *Woman's Home Companion* but "for the editorial pages of women's magazines." In short, all the women's magazines do it, some more than others. The magazines of fashion and home decoration top the list. Even the mild Federal Trade Commission issued a complaint against Condé Nast Publications, Inc. The principal charges were that

Vogue's practices "have a tendency to mislead and deceive its readers into believing that its research and recommendations as embodied in certain published articles are disinterested; also to deprive the public of benefits of normal price competition among retailers by constraining the latter to sell at prices arbitrarily fixed by the publisher and certain manufacturers."

The complaint says Vogue selects garment styles to be played up editorially, and, by agreement with manufacturers, limits the sale of these garments to selected retailers; fixed retail selling prices—to be maintained for at least one month after publication; prohibits the sale of the garments in any other stores for two months; collects 5% on every sale.¹

Vogue in reply said among other things that this was conducted as a valuable service for which the readers asked. No doubt it was.

In spite of the *Woman's Home Companion's* circular and the eager help given by all the other women's magazines, none has been able to think of a scheme so shrewd as that of *Good Housekeeping* with its Institute, its Bureau, and its Seal of Approval. *Good Housekeeping* Seal of Approval is given to objects and supplies for the household. *Good Housekeeping* Bureau tests food products, cos-

¹ From *Sales Management*, June 1, 1935.

metics, and some patent medicines which are agreeably called "pharmaceuticals." Both Institute and Bureau award Seals of Approval which the manufacturer then can use on his packages and on his advertising in other periodicals.

I remember that when Good Housekeeping Institute started many of us in the advertising business were a little uneasy about it. We thought that we were going to have a hard time getting our stuff into *Good Housekeeping*. We saw them nobly turning down our tainted dollars. But we were quite wrong. *Good Housekeeping* got not less, but more advertising. If I remember right, the plan was started with honest intention by Harvey W. Wiley, but they got it away from him. When I asked advertising people whether it is hard to get the Seal of Approval today, they laughed at me.

But it isn't a joke to the woman shopper who is reassured when she finds the Good Housekeeping Seal of Approval on a package she's buying. Millions of women, and men too, take it seriously. It doesn't seem to occur to these millions to ask what the Seal of Approval means. Many of them don't even connect it with *Good Housekeeping* magazine. Sometimes they don't even read *Good Housekeeping*. The Seal sounds solid and honest. Old Dr. Quack wore a dignified beard. Now he wears dignified words. It might be amusing, if you have plenty of time, to try to find the Good Housekeeping Seal of Approval on something that has never been advertised in *Good Housekeeping*.

Good Housekeeping claims that it does not accept for test or approval such pharmaceuticals as are habit-forming or call for self-diagnosis. But doesn't Vicks VapoRub suggest self-diagnosis? Incidentally, in its *Good Housekeeping*

ads Vicks VapoRub tells about making tests with 13,353 subjects, more than 7,000 of them school children. They don't say where the tests were made or who made them, but maybe *Good Housekeeping* knows.

Everything that appears in *Good Housekeeping* is guaranteed as advertised. "We look before you eat," they say editorially. Perhaps they'd better consult an oculist before they look at their February, 1938, issue. In there they will find:

"For older babies—Clapp's Chopped Foods! Should you prepare her vegetables, soups and fruits? 'No!' say doctors. Baby specialists have long urged Clapp's to make more coarsely divided foods for older babies and small children, as the next step after Clapp's Strained Foods." What doctors, what specialists? Does *Good Housekeeping* know?

And how about Gerber's Strained Foods (for babies) that had the approval of *Good Housekeeping*? The Federal Food and Drug Administration got a judgment against them for claiming they contained certain vegetables which were absent.¹

Nucoa—this is a "thrift spread for bread." No doubt it is cheaper, but it isn't, as the ad says, "as rich in food energy as the most expensive spread for bread."

And then there is the yeast ad, and if we are to believe *Good Housekeeping's* Seal of Approval, then they have never heard of the American Medical Association.

And on the back cover, "Ovaltine improves the child's hunger." Now really, doesn't *Good Housekeeping* know that a cup of hot milk with anything added to it, or without anything added to it, will not increase hunger, but decrease it?

¹ *Health & Hygiene*, Sept., 1936.

Good Housekeeping allows Welch's Grape Juice and Libby's Pineapple Juice to advertise themselves as weight reducers, though both contain sugar.

Maybe *Good Housekeeping* has no faith in the Federal Food and Drug Administration. Maybe it has no faith in the American Medical Association, American Dental Association, the state of New Hampshire, the authorities at Harvard or University of Pennsylvania. But these are not all whom *Good Housekeeping* has ignored. It has continued to guarantee advertising after, according to *Health & Hygiene*, "the companies themselves have admitted in written statements the falsity of their claims."

Lysol appears regularly in all the women's magazines but was turned down by the *New Yorker* and the Curtis publications (*Ladies' Home Journal*, *Saturday Evening Post*, *Country Gentleman*). How can *Good Housekeeping* guarantee this product which may be dangerous and certainly is both useless and ineffectual for feminine hygiene? Don't the editors of magazines which take this advertising know that no douche is a reliable contraceptive, and are they so shut off from the world that they don't know that the *Journal of the American Medical Association* has reported deaths from the use of Lysol?

But the Seal of Approval is worth a lot—to *Good Housekeeping*. The Institute and the Bureau are splendid institutions—for *Good Housekeeping*. Because of these, the magazine carries more food advertising than any other magazine in America, besides more than holding its own on other women's products.¹

Mind you, the magazines will not take all advertising. They turn down a good deal of patent medicine advertis-

¹ See Chapter 15 for cosmetics in *Good Housekeeping*.

ing. The publishers' association has agreed at various times to turn down this or that. But these agreements usually fall by the way. The Curtis Publications, which are outside the association, refused cigarette advertising and liquor. The cigarette ban collapsed during the depression. But the division about what they took and what they refused seems rather meritricious. Why take lying cosmetic copy and refuse cigarette and liquor advertising? Because they think cigarettes and liquor are immoral? Or that their readers may think so?

Even the fiction is influenced. Any writer with experience knows that he cannot sell a story to the big circulation magazines which their advertisers might not like. The magazines are all searching hungrily for mystery stories. They buy any that are half-way good, especially if there's a little "love interest" in them. In 1938 there was a mystery story with plenty of "love interest," much better than most of the run. It could not be sold to a single magazine or newspaper because all the trouble in the plot came out of dishonest society-girl puffs in cosmetic ads.

Advertising men will think it silly or unkind to make all this fuss about free space—silly because they are so used to it that they think the public also understands it; and unkind because they point out that the women's magazines couldn't live without advertising, and they've got to give the Service to hold the ads. They point out—and this is true—that women's magazines have made a good job of teaching American women to live better. They have given more variety to the American table, made the housewife try out new kinds of food, lightened her menu and increased the use of fruits and vegetables. They have im-

proved the appearance of her table, though sometimes they've merely added frills. Still, on the whole, the table is more neatly and pleasantly arranged and more appetizing. But editorial pre-selling has done other things not so good. It has helped to teach the American woman that looks are more important than taste.

A large luncheon given to me by a woman's club showed some of the worst of these. The soup had whipped cream on it, the chicken was fixed up some way with creamed sauce, the salad had a cream dressing, and the dessert was buried in cream. There were little trimmings of beets and tomato and slices of egg, and the potatoes had been squeezed into fancy patterns through pastry tubes. With all this cream and all this decoration, there was nothing to eat. Each course looked exactly as though it had come out of the food advertising pages.

A friend of mine, who makes her living writing about things to eat, was invited to apply for a job as food editor of a big woman's magazine. She was to prepare two articles to show how she would handle the job. In one of her recipes she wrote, "Spread butter on top." The editor-in-chief protested, "Oh, you can't do that. We advertise Crisco. You can't specify butter." Then in a menu for a Thanksgiving dinner she included a recipe for cream of mushroom soup. This also was wrong because Heinz had begun to can cream of mushroom soup. Well, after all, Crisco and Heinz and all the others make it possible for the women's magazines to live.

A food editor whom I have known for years said the other day, "I'm distracted. I could write the regular stuff of my department with one eye shut, but all these confer-

ences with advertisers take up so much of my time I never get a chance to think." And she works for a periodical that specializes in menus for children!

An old advertising woman like me is surprised to see how many women take these editorial boosts without suspicion. But after all, they are well hidden. The actual mention by brand name is found only in the lowest-grade papers and magazines, and in those which consider themselves the highest grade—those with snob appeal. Then there is the almost direct method—a product is described, but is not named; you write or telephone for further information. Third is the indirect method. For instance, India Tea suddenly begins to advertise and it so happens that equally suddenly the magazines blossom with articles about tea. It is perfectly justifiable to have articles about tea, but why were there almost none in the last few years, and why are there so many this year?

Even if the advertising men were completely in the right, that the periodicals couldn't live without the advertising, and that people want to read the periodicals and they like to read the ads; even so, I'd like to have them answer two questions: Why don't the periodicals come out frankly and say they're in the advertising business and doing publishing as a side line? And why, if they are working for the advertiser and not the reader, do they insist on their mail subsidies? It is the people of the United States who pay money so that magazines and newspapers can have a low second-class mail rate. But it's the advertisers who get the benefit of it.

Anything we say about newspapers and magazines is child's play compared to what is done on the radio. Trim it

up anyway you please and you won't be exaggerating. Here is a gem that in one paragraph tells all:

—THAT OLD FEELING. Boake Carter on the Columbia network achieves something worthwhile in advertising. The listener does not know when he is news-reporting and when he is plugging his product, with such nice feeling does he work.¹

¹ *New Republic*, Dec. 20, 1937. From *Gateway to Radio*, by Gladys Shaw Erskine.

22. MEDICINE SHOW

EDDIE CANTOR says, "All radio is a hootchy-kootchy dancer that wiggles just long enough. Then she goes into a tent, and a man sells the medicine."¹

Not all, Mr. Cantor, but nearly all. Radio has taken the advertising business back to the old days of the Indian Medicine Show. In the idle evenings people used to gather in the square to listen to Francine from Paris as she sang her songs and to Jack Jones from New Orleans as he told his jokes. A florid man told of the wonders of Shawnee Universal Oil. After "The Greatest Entertainment in the World," Francine and Jack and the man circulated through the audience and sold bottles of "The Greatest Medicine in the World."

Now in the idle evenings you turn on the radio and listen to Beatrice Lillie from London and Jack Benny from Waukegan. Then the announcer with his florid voice sells you the finest goods in the world. Wherever possible the sponsor gets the performers to mix in and help sell the bottles.

Through the years advertising men have built up a set of fairly reliable facts and figures on which to base their printed work. Radio has tossed all that into the rough hands of the Indian Medicine Man. On radio, advertising is back where it was in 1906. "When you enter the realm of radio as a sponsor, you leave all business experience, all sales and advertising experience behind," says agency radio direc-

¹ *Variety*, March 23, 1938.

tor Kenneth L. Watt.¹ An agency that was almost unknown ten years ago, Blackett-Sample Hummert, Inc., now springs to the top with radio business of over \$7,000,000, and older successful agencies drop down on the list.

Radio advertising did not begin to cut a figure until 1929. Since then it has whirled upward like smoke from a pipe dream. Some advertising agencies, eyes fixed on that rising smoke, have lost track of reality. Said the head of a big agency of the *New Yorker*, one of the best advertising media in the country, "I'd be a fool to bother with them at \$1,000 a page when I can play with half a million dollars on the air."

In nine years the drug industry alone has spent over \$60,000,000 on the networks, not counting its millions on local stations. Some of the totals (including drugs) for all radio advertising are: ²

1928	.....	\$ 10,252,497
1929	.....	18,799,571
1933	.....	64,000,000 (est.)
1936	.....	107,550,400
1937	.....	125,000,000 ³

The main charges to the advertiser on radio are three:

Time { Station cost
Telephone tolls

Talent { Actors
Musicians
Emcee (Master of Ceremonies)

Script writers

¹ "One Minute to Go," *Saturday Evening Post*, Apr. 2, 1938.

² The biggest radio spender of 1937 was Procter & Gamble, making soaps and Crisco, with \$4,500,000, besides a huge amount on talent.

³ *Time*, Jan. 24, 1938.

The advertising agency gets 15 per cent on each of these.

Long-wave network broadcasting is not all radio. Long-wave reproduction is more certain than short-wave, but has less carrying power. The cheapest and most practical way is to retransmit by long-distance telephone—to talk into the long-wave transmitter, carry the program across the continent by telephone to different stations on the way, where they are rebroadcast by long-wave from the local station. Telephone tolls are high, and have added enormous extra profits for the American Telephone and Telegraph Company. The telephone system is a sure winner.

It is hard to get accurate figures on either station or talent costs. The networks publish formal rate cards for station costs, but these mean little. Often they are merely the price tag to show where the bickering can begin. On large programs especially there is always a special deal by which the client gets from 2 to 5 per cent unpublished discount.

The rates for space in printed media were that way in the beginning. Department stores still can make special deals because of the size of their contracts. Otherwise the newspaper, magazine, and car card rates are the same to everybody. No doubt radio will become equally stable if it keeps on carrying advertising long enough.

The lies that would be told about prices for talent are obvious. The actor or bandleader wants to build up a fictitious value. The advertiser helps along through childish vanity: "See what we can afford to pay!"; also to scare off competition. Eventually he has to pay at least part of the puff. At the same time he's quarreling with his advertising agency about the high prices of talent. So the agencies use a foolish amount of energy in trying to bring down the talent prices. One agency actually spent \$500 in telephone

calls (charged to the client) to get a prominent woman on a program, and then refused to pay her more than \$100 for the job. They were trying to set a precedent of low prices.

There are no fixed prices on talent except for musicians, where the union establishes the minimums. This is one case where the advertising agency is glad to deal with a union. But it is never possible to buy a name band for the scale price. Small units, and not necessarily nationally known, can command \$1,500 per broadcast. On the average, if an average can be struck, \$2,000 per broadcast will not be far wrong. Radio sponsors change about so often and so quickly that all of the performers mentioned in this book may have shifted to other programs between the time of Ok'ing the proofs and publication. Here are some of the figures¹ given by *Fortune* (May, 1938) on the ten most popular programs in the Cooperative Analysis of Broadcasting Report:

Program	Production	Time	Total
Chase & Sanborn Hour (McCarthy)	\$20,000	\$15,900	\$35,900
Jack Benny (Jell-O)	15,000	11,500	26,500
Kraft Music Hall (Bing Crosby)	13,500	17,100	30,600
Lux Radio Theatre (guest movie stars) ..	15,000	17,300	32,300
Eddie Cantor (Texaco)	15,000	11,900	26,900
Al Jolson (Lever Bros.)	12,000	10,400	22,400
Major Bowes' Amateur Hour (Chrysler) .	25,000	20,100	45,100
Royal Gelatin Hour (Rudy Vallée)	9,500	15,500	25,000
Burns and Allen (General Foods, for Grape-Nuts)	10,000	10,600	20,600
Town Hall Tonight (Fred Allen; sponsored by Bristol-Myers Co.)	10,000	15,800	25,800

The prices for guest stars on programs are going down steadily. Rudy Vallée on Royal Gelatin pays \$1,500 in the

¹ Each of these Emcees, though he has an agent to represent him, is really a business in himself. Allen, for instance, has to pay out of his share his script writers, the Allen Art Players, etc., but doesn't pay the orchestra or guests.

East as tops, but \$500 is nearer the average. Allen on Sal Hepatica pays from \$75 to \$100 for a singing guest. Blackett-Sample Hummert ad agency pays \$125 for an act on Manhattan Merry-Go-Round and Hammerstein's Music Hall. When an octet gets \$125, there's not much for each one. Kate Smith pays low prices.¹

Nothing is what it seems to be on the air. The manufacturers of the machines find that their market is almost glutted. The Radio Corporation of America, which controls the National Broadcasting Company and manufactures radios, paid no dividends on common stock in 1935-1936, and twenty cents a share in 1937.² Columbia Broadcasting showed better figures; these were \$1.30 in 1935 and \$1.95 in 1937. But none of the big companies is a stockholders' gold mine.

While these big outfits are making so little money, many of the less showy stations have neat local gold mines. The local station may be a part of a national chain or it may not be. Local sponsors pay more than chain sponsors. But the public wants to know it can hear President Roosevelt and the Philharmonic Symphony if it takes the notion. The problem is how to carry as much local and spot business as possible and yet satisfy the listeners.

We used to think we moved swiftly through confusion in the old days, that we hurried under pressure. But we were leisurely aristocrats compared to the people who hustle along the radio programs today. Broadway has moved in and has left the experienced man dazed and deafened.

¹ *Variety*, March 30, 1938.

² For the last few years RCA meetings have been furious affairs, with abuse, denunciation and a certain amount of gloomy prophesying. But last autumn RCA declared its first common stock dividend."—*Time*, Apr. 18, 1938.

No more year's planning ahead. Stuff has to be prepared fresh every week, sometimes every day. As with other show business, hysteria shrieks its way through radio advertising. Again we pick a bit from radio director Kenneth L. Watt, telling about a half-hour program in the *Saturday Evening Post*:

All I have to do now is round up the talent, persuade well-known stars to give free auditions, find script writers who do not think they are Octavus Roy Cohen or P. G. Wodehouse and should be paid accordingly, listen to the niece of the chairman of the board, whose uncle is convinced she has "just the right type of voice for radio," talk the networks into giving us an option without an order on the only good times they have available for sale, audition dozens of announcers—"after all, Mr. Watt, the announcer's voice will represent our company to millions of people"—and spend days solemnly discussing the merchandising of the program.

On all other types of advertising, your medium is all ready for you. You look it over, and if you like it you use it; if you don't, you cross it off. The magazine or newspaper is edited by its own employees. If the editor knows what the public wants, he's got circulation for you. If he doesn't, he's out. But on the radio, the advertising man is the writer and editor.

Take the *New York Times*. Suppose Lucky Strike edited and wrote Page 1, sticking their ads in different spots on the page. Suppose Ford did the same with the editorial pages, using Mr. Cameron's blah as the leading editorial. Suppose Jell-O wrote Page 6 with recipes all calling for Jell-O. And Alka-Seltzer the obituary page, with little warnings scattered through telling you how to keep out of those terse columns. One page of the paper might be pretty high-

grade, the next silly, the third vulgar, and none of it would be got up with the idea of telling you anything.

One of the shrewdest editors that ever lived was Morrill Goddard, editor of Hearst's *American Weekly*. He was getting up a paper for readers like the average radio audience. He found that he could apportion the reading matter in each issue thus:

	<i>Per Cent</i>
Human interest	33
Scientific and educational	30
Fiction	14
Household	12
Detective	11

No such planning is possible on American radio today. Not only is the advertiser reporter, special article man, columnist, editor, and salesman, but he puts his stuff in higgledy-piggledy without any proportion or arrangement, so that on one hour there will be nothing to listen to except funnies, and on another nothing but music. So you get a confused set of programs. Also, you may get a confused advertising agency.

Most agencies think they could do a better job on programs if the client would let them alone to do the job. I know a copy writer who in six months lost fifteen pounds trying to please the client and yet keep some kind of decent show going. Everybody thinks he's a critic. I do myself. It's all I can do to keep my opinions of programs as entertainment out of this chapter. As a thwarted critic of books, of the stage, of the movies, the client has a bad case of suppression. Except during the deal in a bridge game, he's had little chance to express himself. But here at last he can do so fully and freely. He's paying the bill. He loves radio auditions. He can sit back and say *This is wrong*, and *This is*

right, and Why don't you do the other. And here's his chance—the one that everybody is looking for—to put on a show, to act in a play. He can't act himself, but, next best, he can direct others. He wants to be present at all the auditions. So does the advertising manager. So does his wife, and his secretary—to get the woman's angle. They're all there at the auditions. To quote Mr. Watt once more,

I am of the opinion that he just wants to be able to say to the boys at the golf club, "As I was saying to So-and-So, the movie actor, the other day—"

So the agency Radio Director is struggling for what he considers good advertising ideas, while the client is dazed with the

"glamour that surrounds theatrical and radio people. The ordinary businessman is helpless when he is exposed to it. His usual standards of value are worthless."

But not all clients fall. Here and there is an exception—like the client who's ashamed of the program. More than one client has canceled a radio program which was selling goods because his friends made fun of it. And though Mr. Watt complains bitterly, the agencies use fully that theatre glamour to sell a radio program to the client when the agency knows it ought to put his money into newspapers and magazines.

But it's hard to make a dramatic story about the selling of space in magazines and newspapers. Radio has a better chance. The telephone rings in Detroit. It's the advertising agency director in New York saying, "I've got a new show—a knockout—I'd like to have you audition it. We got Grace Moore here. Paul Whiteman too." Then the sales manager has to "hop down" to New York, and before the audi-

tion is over he is saying, "Hello, Gracie," to Miss Moore, and "Hello, Paul," to Mr. Whiteman. The program is sold and millions of dollars are spent. The serious programs like the symphonies may grow out of the same desire for big names, though a few floors higher up.

Then there are script writers. Usually the comics pay their own script writers. A season or two ago, says Mr. Watt,

we hired a famous team of Broadway playwrights to do a script at a weekly stipend of \$1,500, and then had to pay another radio writer \$750 per week to adapt the scripts for the air.

But fine as these figures are, there are plenty of script writers working for \$50 a week. As a whole, the script writers make less than the old-line copy writer. Young people just starting in today are eager to get into radio. It seemed to us in the old days that four out of five college graduates were trying to get into the advertising business. Now they're trying for radio instead, and they keep down the prices of script writing.

In more ways than one the "script show" is a relief to the advertising agency. "Script show" is the trade name for the continuous story, the serial of the air. "One Man's Family" was the first of these. A huge success, it was followed by dozens of others—Vic and Sade, Myrt and Marge, Easy Aces. These are easier programs to run because you pick out your actors only once at the beginning and then they're set. Most of the script shows have sold goods. They don't wear out as quickly as the more showy evening programs. "One Man's Family" has run for eight years.

On script shows, Blackett-Sample Hummert, Inc., devised a shrewd arrangement called, unhappily, contiguous periods. The usual script show runs 15 minutes. Instead of

buying four 15-minute intervals at different times in the day, the agency bought a whole hour for Procter & Gamble, thus getting the hourly rate which is cheaper than the 15-minute rate. (On contiguous shows, the agency's commission is 25 per cent instead of the usual 15 per cent.) Then they divided the hour into 15-minute periods. Each quarter-hour had a different serial story, each quarter-hour was given to a separate Procter & Gamble product, one each, perhaps for Crisco, for Chipso, for Ivory Soap and for Oxydol. I am told that sometimes Procter & Gamble uses two whole hours broken into eight such quarters. The first quarter-hour is always given the best of the shows. Advertisers have discovered that part of the audience doesn't turn the dial after a good show—that a good show will carry along a large section of its audience to the next show, whether good or bad. There is always a stiff fight for places after popular shows.

But even script shows have to be written. On printed advertising, you had a staff of experienced copy men and women. These men aren't so good on script shows. You have a new script show account and you hire a special staff to work on it. But the show blows up in thirteen weeks, and you're left with a staff you've contracted for and nothing for them to do.

Hence the tendency to put all work on radio into the hands of outside agencies, merely to keep your radio director with a few assistants, and let professional show people do the rest. The outside organizations which get up programs are run either by the broadcasting companies or by "talent agencies." The talent agent is really an employment agent. Well-known stars pay him from 2 to 3 per cent; the little-known sometimes as high as 30 per cent. When the

broadcasting company acts as agent, it charges a flat 10 per cent.

If an outside organization gets up your program, you can charge your client 15 per cent straight through on everything it does. And the 15 per cent shows a good profit. Your own office is free of wasted expense and confusion. But your hold on the client is weakened. The outside agencies are not your people. They're working for everybody. Your client knows he can keep on using them if he shifts his account to another ad-agency. The agency has to depend on its radio director to hold the account, which means that radio directors will grow in importance and will soon be the stars of the advertising business. Some of them now get \$25,000 and \$35,000 a year. Soon they'll be getting \$100,000.

It is said that television is close to commercial success and that its manufacturers are holding back through dread of program difficulties. You could throw a panic into any advertising agency by proving that television would be a commercial success tomorrow. In the theatre a show runs for six months, sometimes for several years, and even if it is unlucky it may run for six weeks. On radio you have to have a new program every week, and sometimes every night. That is hard enough. It would be worse with television. You would not only need fresh dialogue, fresh gags, and fresh music once a week as on radio. You'd also have to find new plays, new performances, new people. If an audience gets tired of listening to a radio performer, how much more quickly is it going to be bored by an actor or actress whom it can see as well as hear once a week?

Even the old repertory theatres repeated their shows. What advertiser could pay enough to a company to learn

its parts, to rehearse and to act with fresh costumes and fresh scenery—all for one performance only? On top of that, to pay a playwright for a fresh play each time?

Perhaps we would develop a whole nation of playwrights and a whole new army of actors. Even so, there would be another problem for which there seems to be no solution. It is less tiring to listen than to look. The same man who half-consciously keeps his radio going for hours, would be irritated if he had to sit still and watch for the same number of hours. While the radio is running, he can play cards or read a book, or even hold a sort of conversation. The housewife cleans and sweeps and cooks while she listens. With television, they'd have to put everything aside to watch the screen. The bridge game would have to stop. The housework would remain undone. One of the pleasures of radio is the complete relaxation it brings. It requires no effort at all. Television demands effort—the effort of attention.

It is still costly. Receivers would have to retail at \$300 and that means no quantity sale. There are other difficulties. The pictures as shown would have to be very small—too small to compete seriously with the movies. It has been proved by tests, according to the Columbia Broadcasting System, that on a television instrument even the present movies are too slowly paced to hold an audience for long. But in spite of all its troubles, television seems inevitable.

Television would be one more fantastic form added to the present confusion which upsets the older advertising man. With radio, Broadway moved into the offices. Next they expect Coney Island.

Last year San Francisco advertising men acted out a

funny skit written by Carl F. Ohliger of the McCann-Erickson Company (ad-agents). An old copy writer (he's all of thirty-five) who has been away in the South Seas comes back to his agency to get his old job. Everybody's glad to see him, but they're too rushed to listen to him. As he sits at the desk of the director, he's startled by troupes of almost naked girls, and by fliers in costume, and is deafened by strange noises. At last the old copy writer gets a word in. He wants his old job back. He's had a fine rest and can do better work than ever. But the director has to turn him down. "That stuff's out. We don't do anything like that any more. No more printed advertising. Clients have got to have sky-writing, and dancers. They've got to have choruses, and sound trucks. And we give it to them hot. Sorry, old man!"

23. DOES RADIO ADVERTISING PAY?

WORSE than all other radio irritations and expenses for the advertising agent is the uneasy feeling that after all radio may not be much good as a medium for selling goods. He suspects (and sometimes knows) that in spite of a few dazzling successes, millions thrown into radio 'would have brought better returns through less flashy media. Changing clients is expensive. Most agencies believe that it is better business to make the client's advertising a success. But radio has increased the mortality of accounts, and the "soak 'em and lose 'em" theory has some sense in dealing with radio clients.

All advertising is speculative, but radio is as much a gamble as the Broadway show business. You put your money on the odd or even and then you hold your breath. There's nothing much else to hold. You're not even sure of that fundamental of advertising procedure—the size of your circulation. On newspapers and magazines circulation figures can be proved. The Audit Bureau of Circulations (A.B.C.) watches and reports on the circulation of all ad-worthy periodicals. On radio such an audit would be impossible.

Even such a basic figure as the number of radios in the United States is rolled up in fog. The Columbia Broadcasting Company says that there are 24,000,000 "homes" with radios in use. (In many cases, this means more than one radio; sometimes two, and occasionally more, in one fam-

ily.) Some of the claims are as high as 33,000,000, but there are only about 33,000,000 American families altogether. Dr. George Gallup, who is the best statistical authority in the advertising business, figures that there are only about 25,000,000 sets. The Department of Commerce sets a figure of 26,000,000. Of these, 6,000,000 are in automobiles.

Suppose we accept the lowest of these figures, 20,000,000 radio families. Allowing $3\frac{1}{2}$ persons to a family gives you a possible audience of 70,000,000 people, which is quite large enough for anyone. So, argue the radio ad-salesmen, except in depressed areas, you're safe in figuring a radio to every family. Maybe you are and maybe you aren't. In short, when it comes to figuring on your "circulation," you're dealing with slipperiness and uncertain figures.

But in accepting 20,000,000 families as your figure, you've got to remember that the millions don't listen all the time. Columbia Broadcasting Company says the average listening time is five hours a day. Kenneth Goode, an optimist about advertising, in *What About Radio?* leans toward four hours a day. Both are probably high. Your guess is as good as theirs.

Certain things we do know definitely. That people listen to the radio more in bad times than in good. That the biggest listening time is from 7:30 to 10:00 o'clock at night. That a program is more appealing when the whole family is listening or laughing at it together. The struggle for time at those hours is a sharp one. But advertisers are beginning to find out that though they have far fewer listeners, daytime hours for women may sell as much goods. You reach the woman when she is absorbed in her buying problems. She listens, then she telephones her market, or goes out to shop. At night, the listeners laugh at the jokes and

then go to bed. So you're apt to make more actual sales in proportion to cost from the simple daytime program than from the expensive evening one. In places where people go home to lunch, that's a good time even for men. The children's hours from 4:30 to 6:00 were an accident. Children would prefer a later hour. But we'll get to that further on.

Radio has an intensive effect on the hearer (if the hearer is listening), but if you can't get the hearer to listen to your ad at that instant, it's lost. You can miss a streetcar and see the advertising card in another one. You can put aside your magazine, but you'll pick it up again, or you'll buy another with the same ad. But if you don't turn the dial to a program, it is a complete loss as far as you're concerned.

That same thing works another way. If you are listening to one program, all competitive advertisers lose you, and that's something that doesn't happen in any other medium.

So you must try to find out how many people actually listen to the individual program. The books, the questionnaires, the house-to-house callers, the telephone ringing to get answers to the question, would make mountains. But even the most conscientious investigator is not a safe guide.

On the various methods advertisers put most trust in the Cooperative Analysis of Broadcasting (C.A.B.).

C.A.B. gets its information partly through the "callback" system, phoning thousands of listeners each day to ask them what programs they had heard. Certain advertising agencies and individual advertisers use somewhat the same system. These agencies also use the "coincidental" telephone check, which means calling up people while they're listening. Your phone rings and a polite girl asks you, "Have you a radio?"

"Is it running?" "What station are you listening to?" On a new program, an advertiser will have six or seven operators in key cities checking telephone lists to ask these questions. One advertising agency sends out 5,000 such calls on the evening of its chief program. A third method is to send representatives to call on owners with printed lists of programs and advertisers. Radio owners are asked to check what they listened to and what they liked. This method gives an inkling of the income of the listener and his buying power.¹

But the Cooperative Analysis of Broadcasting is the chief standard. It is a mutual and non-profit organization not connected with any advertiser or radio system. Its findings are copyrighted. The average subscriber pays \$100 a month for about 300 ratings of programs. Ratings are given in percentages. If a program has a rating of 25 per cent it means that one-fourth of all the set owners interviewed said that they had listened to that program.

As I said above, the C.A.B. investigators call up and ask listeners what they heard during the past few hours. C.A.B. makes half a million interviews a year. Mr. A. W. Lehman, manager of the Cooperative Analysis of Broadcasting, says that the telephone calls are prorated among various economic groups with a heavy loading toward the lowest income groups. This is to give the proper place in the statistics to those groups.

Calls are made at 9, 12, 5, and 8. No telephoning is done after 9 P.M. If the investigator hears the telephone ring a few times, she immediately hangs up. She doesn't want to call the listener away from the bath or the baby.

¹ D. P. Smelser, now chairman of the governing committee of the C.A.B., originated this third method.

Charlie McCarthy (in February, 1938) got the highest rating ever given to a regularly sponsored program—46.8 per cent. Major Bowes and Jack Benny approached this, but never reached it. Some ratings given to special non-sponsored programs have been higher. The highest was for the Louis-Schmeling fight in 1936—57 per cent. But there have been two programs which in some ways reached a higher figure. For instance, the valedictory of King Edward was 45 per cent, but it came at 5 in the afternoon, which was nothing like as good a time as that of the Louis-Schmeling fight. It is figured that Edward had three times the normal audience for all radio programs combined for that hour.¹

It is probable that Roosevelt's inaugural talk would have had the highest rating ever given, but no ratings were made during that week. Roosevelt talks in 1936 and 1937 showed a rating of 30.1 per cent. And here is something interesting—on the Landon-Roosevelt pre-election talks, the ratio of listeners shown was almost the same as the ratio of the popular vote.

Advertisers try too hard to get into high-listening figures like those of the five leading programs for two different periods.

1934	October, 1937, to April, 1938
1. Rudy Vallée	1. Chase & Sanborn . . . 40.4
2. "Showboat"	2. Jack Benny 35.5
3. Joe Penner	3. Kraft Music Hall . . . 27.5
4. Jack Benny	4. Lux Radio Theater . . 25.7
5. Ed Wynn	5. Eddie Cantor 24.5

¹ The information in this and that in the following four paragraphs is copyright material supplied by the Cooperative Analysis of Broadcasting and is used with its permission.

Leading daytime programs for the latter period were:

Guy Lombardo	10.5
Today's Children	7.8
Women in White	7.8
Ma Perkins	7.3
Vic and Sade	7.0

Interesting is this list of the most enduring radio programs:

Morning Devotions	Kate Smith
Uncle Don	The Goldbergs
National Farm and Home Hour	Morton Downey
Lady Next Door	Major Bowes
Orphan Annie	Gypsies
Amos 'n' Andy	Clara, Lu 'n' Em
Guy Lombardo	Singing Lady

The programs that last seem to be the meek ones, the ones where the listener can feel more powerful than the performer. Jack Benny and Phil Baker are always modest in manner. Any listener can look down on Amos 'n' Andy. Charlie McCarthy is a doll.

A new device, either the Nielsen Audimeter or something like it, attached to your radio set may banish some of the guesswork; but while it will show what sets are turned on and to what programs, it will not show whether the radio is running idly or whether anybody is listening to it.

There are, of course, innumerable special mail questionnaires. For instance, Columbia Broadcasting Company asked Boston University to make a study of the "very rich and very social" in the city of Boston. This test showed that the "very rich and very social" had almost the same taste as everybody else on the radio. It might have been pos-

sible to guess this in advance. But it was, of course, better to prove it. ". . . programs such as March of Time, Lily Pons, André Kostelanetz, and Boake Carter have a higher percentage of listeners in the higher income brackets than in the lower-class homes," says Columbia. "But the differences aren't great."

Unsolicited letters and telephone calls are mighty welcome as checks on the audience, though a listener may like your funny man without buying your cigarettes.

An offer of a sample or a premium will get some check. Chase & Sanborn offered Charlie McCarthy made out of cardboard (and also as a spoon handle) as a premium, and drove on it so hard that they had little time for sales talk. If your premium talk is good, it uses up too much time and you haven't enough left over to tell about your product. Though Chase & Sanborn asked for the label from a bag of coffee for the doll or the spoon, still this method seems better as a way to find out the number of listeners than as a way to make sales. All you can usually learn from a "free" drive is whether the public likes the premium or not.

Some of the checks on listeners are quite unexpected. One singer said he had a cold and forty different bottles of medicine came in. Guy Lombardo told about the broken strings of his violin and from the audience he got 193 yards of violin string.

An announcer and an organist for WLS bet that more than 500 tuned in at 6:05 A.M. The organist lost the week's breakfasts if more than 500 did not respond. Two thousand listeners wrote in to rescue him.¹

¹ Kenneth Goode, *What About Radio?*

Sometimes the station gets some idea of what a program is doing by complaints. When Senator Borah was talking one night, there were many complaints from people who wanted to listen to the usual professional entertainment of that hour. Great Moments in History, National Opera over WEA, and Slumber Hour over WJZ, were discontinued because they seemed to have no life. Hundreds of telephone calls protested.

From all these various methods advertisers form a rough guesswork idea of the possible size of the audience. Then they assume that one-third of these possible hearers isn't at home. Another third hasn't tuned in. That leaves one-third of all radio sets to be divided among all advertisers at that moment. In a town of 60,000 sets, if you had your program on every station at any one time, you wouldn't have more than 20,000 sets working for you. But unless you're the President of the United States, you don't have all the stations working for you. Instead, you compete with all other programs, whether advertising or not. Also, you don't know whether the radio has been left running all day, or whether it has been turned on for a special program. If the audience has dialed in specially, the listening is worth while; if the radio has been running mechanically, the listening is worth little.

Radio enthusiasts can show you plenty of impressive figures. . . . In one month Ovaltine, sponsors of "Little Orphan Annie," distributed 174,000 children's mugs.

Radio brought the Metropolitan Life well over a million requests for exercise charts.

Three broadcasts brought in requests—and package tops—for more than 75,000 books [in return for top of Borax package].¹

¹ Kenneth Goode, *op. cit.*

The R. B. Davis Baking Powder Company got 200,000 requests through their "Mystery Chef" program.

On the Atlantic & Pacific Bandwagon hour in January, 1938, Kate Smith stopped the regular performance to ask for money for the Red Cross. The answer was 650,000 pieces of mail with money from every state in the union. That is an astounding tribute to Kate Smith as an entertainer; but does it mean that A & P sold any butter or eggs? You can answer this question as well as any advertising man. You don't know, and he doesn't know. Few of the impressive figures mean much in sales.

Not long ago, in a Chase & Sanborn program, Mae West did a take-off on Adam and Eve. Part of the public was shocked by the "strip-tease."¹ There was an uproar. Newspapers got letters. Churches protested. Chase & Sanborn got letters and telegrams. Chase & Sanborn apologized. The J. Walter Thompson Company, advertising agency, apologized. Mae West was out as a radio performer. But none of these kickbacks was so disheartening as the one final irony—that the letters and the telephone calls of protest also poured in on Maxwell House Coffee. Maxwell House, which had nothing to do with the programs, had to put on six extra telephone operators to handle complaints about Mae West. It looked as though Charlie McCarthy sold plenty of other brands of coffee, because people remembered Charlie and not the brand. After this discouraging experience, Charlie began to mix sales talks with his gags.

A more solid response is that of Johns-Manville who get 50,000-100,000 invitations a year for salesmen to visit peo-

¹ But the program's C.A.B. rating rose to an all-time high and passed all other programs.

ple about to build. This is a really worth-while return from radio advertising.

The perfect check-up, of course, is a jump in sales. But there have not been many such sales increases directly traceable to radio. The few there are have cost plenty of big talk in the business. One such perhaps is that of Pillsbury Flour, which, Kenneth L. Goode says, "got positive proof of purchases of 250,000 sacks of flour by offering a booklet summary of their 'Today's Children' broadcast for incoming sack labels." Procter & Gamble spent a little over \$1,000,000 on networks in 1936, while in 1937 they jumped to \$4,500,000, mostly in the quarter-hour daytime shows. You can safely assume that they think they can trace an enormous increase in sales to radio. But Walter Winchell points out that

Major Bowes and Rudy Vallée radio shows would rate high in anybody's book. Yet the sponsor which owns both earned 9¢ a share less this year than last. That's a loss of about 10%! ¹

Amos 'n' Andy brought sales to Pepsodent toothpaste. But after a few years the increase stopped, and Amos 'n' Andy went to Campbell's Soup. This didn't mean that Amos 'n' Andy were worn out with the public, but that Pepsodent had got all it could get out of them. Amos 'n' Andy are radio miracles. Usually the public gets sick of the entertainer long before its buying top has been reached.

Fanciest figure of all is on Jell-O. Jack Benny's broadcasts are said to have brought in 67,000,000 Jell-O box tops. Whether this figure is correct or not, obviously Jell-O is selling, not its own product, but Jack Benny. What will

¹ From *What About Radio?*

happen to the sales of Jell-O when Benny loses his drawing power?

As you see, these results, except for Mr. Winchell's sardonic comment, are all shouts of joy. The bad ones are merely whispered. And if you should publish them, they would be denied.

But radio's best sample of success is Lady Esther cosmetics. This program is cheap to put on. It needs no high-priced talent either for writing or for delivery. The Wayne King Orchestra program soothes the audience into a sense of peaceful submission. Unaided, the program has built up a wholly new business. There is, of course, no such person as Lady Esther. She is a man (or his wife maybe) in Chicago who started in on a shoestring in a back room, took a little time on the radio, hired a sugary band and a woman with a sickening voice. In two or three years, he built up a business of \$5,000,000 and now has yachts.

Advertising men who care more about selling goods than about show business like spot (local) radio. With a spot program you can adapt your selling plan to different audiences, to different densities of population, to climatic conditions. A Southerner can't be given a high pressure talk. He is irritated by it. He likes slow persuasiveness. Spot radio has the same arguments in its favor as those given for local newspaper advertising in the chapter *What Do People Read?*

On spot radio you can test and enlarge as you find something that pulls results. You can't test out a local radio station as easily as you would a local newspaper. On a nationwide network you probably would use expensive talent, and you can't afford to pay Fred Allen \$5,000 for one evening to try out a \$100-station in Little Rock. You can't try out a

local station to see whether you're going to compete with the huge Lucky Strike or Major Bowes program. If you're competing with them, you can't compete modestly. But you can test out local stations with more modest talent.

It is easier to check results on a spot program. On a spot news broadcast, it is easy for the broadcaster to slip in a word that Lutz & Glutz are having a sale on Brown's Cocoa today. If that works the program is effective.

Amos 'n' Andy were used at first on a number of local stations, and the hit they made established them nationally. Like many local programs, these were disc programs; that is, they were done from phonograph records. Most people want the performers in person. Amos 'n' Andy's popularity rose sharply when they changed from disc to personal programs.

The rents of local stations are small; usually they have one or two rooms in some inexpensive building. Material or talent costs them only from \$5 to \$50. They must sell only one commercial hour a day to come out even. Everything else is velvet. There are 600 of these local stations. Unfortunately, some of them are bad pay. Talent and writers cannot always collect. They are causing plenty of trouble in the industry and have aroused the anger of the Federal Communications Commission.

On a national program, the testing is difficult. Campbell's Soup on its \$1,500,000 Hollywood Hotel show found a way. They mentioned kinds of soup which usually they don't try to sell. These special soups began to move. But an elaborate program of this sort may wear out at any moment. It has none of the permanency of simpler programs.

Not all programs are meant to sell goods. "Classical" pro-

grams (good music), except for radio sets and phonograph records have little to do with selling goods. Some of them are put on to create friendly feeling. Among such institutional white-shirt fronts are the Ford and General Motors Sunday evening hours and the Standard Oil of California symphonies. Skeptical people, though grateful, wondered why Columbia put on a run of Shakespeare programs in the summer of 1937. To spread a little goodwill among the highbrows, said the advertising cynics, so the radio networks won't have so much trouble with legislation and with the Federal Communications Commission.

Sometimes institutional radio has worked in reverse fashion. Philco, which was on excellent terms with the C.I.O., had Boake Carter as its spokesman. This gentleman began to express opinions that were anti-labor. There was an uproar from the left, and Philco quickly got rid of Carter. But Carter was also used by General Foods. Colby Chester of General Foods, and Chairman of the National Association of Manufacturers, dislikes the New Deal, and liked the pretty picture of Business that Carter drew for the public. The C.I.O. then boycotted General Foods.

For selling goods, the "commercial" (sales talk) is the important part of the program. Yet N. W. Ayer & Son, advertising agents, complain that the commercial is the stepchild of the radio. "To build up your entertainment at the expense of your sales story is like trying to tie a necktie with one hand in your pocket."

The commercial is a hard nut to crack—so it gets pushed aside for the easier and more entertaining part of the program. The commercial isn't show business; it's hard work. How to work in the sales talk so that people won't snap off

your voice? How to make people remember the product, go to a store and buy?

If you ask most people in the business what they think about the commercial, a glaze comes for a moment over their eyes—then suddenly bright and happy, they say, "Look at Jack Benny and Jell-O! Why, there was one night when he worked in the name Jell-O fifty times—and always funny. He even says Jell-O! instead of Hello!" Then the ad-man droops and grows wistful. "Wish we could do that on our program."

There actually are people who like the announcer, who like to listen to him, and obey him gladly. To the lonely listener he sometimes becomes a friend and welcome visitor. There are even people, says T. R. Carskadon,¹ who talk to him out loud. But these are not enough. The advertiser has to get the listener who turns the dial at the first word of sales talk—or who has trained his subconscious mind to keep him deaf as long as the blurb's running.

On the daytime program the commercial is a bit easier than in the evening. When the woman is working at her job of running the house, any program that gives precise technical information has meaning, and she'll listen to endless commercial talk. The emphasis is usually on money-saving, time-saving, and new housekeeping ideas. It's a rule in most agencies that daytime commercials can be long-winded, can come out flat-footed, can order the customer about.

On foods and cooking appliances, the commercial can be worked in on menus and new methods of cooking. Recipes used to play a big part. But they're no longer popular. C. W.

¹ *New Republic*, Sept. 22, 1937.

Person, publicity director of the American Gas Association, says, "No recipes. Women won't take a pencil and write." It is better to wait till the end of the program and then say that a bulletin containing all the recipes mentioned can be had at a dealer's. This plan was used with special success in a number of local programs like that of the Roanoke (Va.) Gas Company.

A dash of sex plays its part on day-time programs for women. On a Crisco afternoon program the commercial came through in a painfully radiant male voice. "I'm in love," the man burst out. "I'm in love with a chocolate cake"—naturally, made with Crisco. Male announcers with such voices on "practical" programs make many women a bit sick, but go over with the less experienced.

For the period of his program, the broadcaster is a guest in the house. If he has any sense or any manners, he won't scream at you. The "high pressure hypo" type of commercial is an annoyance. If the announcer shouts, the audience may not be able to hear what he's saying because of the noise. The loud announcer, preferably with a nasal voice and a provincial accent, was radio's answer to ridicule of the la-de-da broadcaster. Neither would make a good clerk behind a counter—why use him on radio?

The announcer has only a few seconds to give his sales talk. The big chains have set limits on the time he can use. After six o'clock New York time, Columbia allows for commercials

- 2 minutes, 10 seconds, on quarter-hour program
- 2 minutes, 30 seconds, on 25-minute program
- 3 minutes, on half-hour program
- 4 minutes, 30 seconds, on three-quarter-hour program
- 6 minutes, on full-hour program

The average announcer can do 120 to 125 words a minute. The longer the period, the more allowance is made for pause and expression.

Of course, good commercials are addressed to the simplest minds. Since the announcer cannot see the audience, some good commercials make it a rule always to repeat the simple central idea three times. Radio copy is to be spoken, not read. It has nothing to do with writing. It is preaching. For that reason authors of commercials should dictate rather than write them.

There are six standardized types of commercials: Institutional, direct selling, dialogue, the skit, gag commercials, the commercial that uses the whole program. You know what they are—you've heard them all.

W. J. Cameron on the Ford Sunday evening hour is institutional. Of direct selling, you've heard plenty. Dialogue commercial seems to me exasperating, but probably I'm wrong. The gag commercial is usually done by the Emcee and the actors rather than by the announcer. A sly pun slips the commercial over on the listener while he's laughing, as when Don Bestor says he is "jealous" and Jack Benny replies, "Remember Jell-O's six delicious flavors, folks." Or when Beatrice Lillie talks about her "Borden House for Girls."

Macy's has found a perfect whole program commercial. A group of real customers sits about while an interlocutor asks questions. "How, madam," he says, "do you clean your lamp-shade?" The woman, obviously genuine, gives a rather inept answer. He tells her how Macy's thinks it should be done. Of the next woman he asks, "Are there any waterproof trunks?" She says, "Yes," and then he tells her she's mistaken, that Macy's Department of Standards has proved

that there is no waterproof trunk. And so on. Every word is advertising for Macy's, and nearly every word is of interest to the listening customer. To make it perfect, the program costs almost nothing for talent.

Skits are often a good way to work in the commercial. Young & Rubicam are "proud" of a really horrible (and successful) skit on Fletcher's Castoria. Years ago, when Dr. Harvey W. Wiley was doing fine work for *Good House-keeping* magazine, he described Castoria as a mixture of baking soda, senna, Rochelle salt, spirit of wintergreen, wormseed, peppermint and anise—"a combination that he considered an unjustifiable burden on a baby's stomach."¹ The skit is a bit long, but I'm putting it here in full because Young & Rubicam is a high-class advertising agency.

ANNOUNCER: Ladies and gentlemen, let's all move into ring-side seats at Battle of the Century, where our old menace—Public Enemy Number one, the Common Cold—has just lost a decision to that up-and-coming youngster—Tommy—the kid. Let's get the loser over to the microphone and hear what he has to say . . . here he is . . . "Sniffy" McColdgerm.

(DEEP, VILLAINOUS MAN'S VOICE): It was a tough fight, folks—but I never even got started. Every time I tried to lay the kid up with a cold, he fought me off. But I know what did it. His mother was in his corner handling him—and she was always keeping after the kid to take plenty of rest. And did she keep pouring water in him! Boy—I never saw such a scrap! Besides—she kept giving the kid the strength to fight me off. Anyway, it was a tough fight, folks—and I'm sorry I lost. I don't think I'll be home, Mom—I'm getting weaker (*Voice begins to fade and trails off entirely*) and weaker—and weaker. (*A dull thud*)

ANNOUNCER: And so another cold germ was fought to a standstill because the youngster got plenty of rest, lots of water,

¹ American Medical Association.

and because that "something in the bottle" [sic] was Fletcher's Castoria. Fletcher's Castoria is an excellent help in fighting youngsters' colds . . . because it's an ideal children's laxative that gently cleanses the youngster's system of waste. And once that waste is gone—the child has more energy to *throw off* his cold. Of course, a child should be given plenty of rest and lots of water to drink the minute you see a cold coming on. But don't forget a good laxative. And when you think of a good children's laxative—you'll think of Fletcher's Castoria. (*Signature bell*)

Why doesn't the blue pencil of the censor stop the advertising of a product like Fletcher's Castoria? Because most censorship on the air is self-imposed. The Federal Communications Commission has no direct authority on programs. Its real job is to decide who shall have certain wave lengths. But indirectly it has considerable power because there are no permanent radio licenses. Permits are good for only six months at a time. Each half-year the permit has to be renewed. If a station is producing stuff which the F.C.C. doesn't like, naturally it will have trouble with its renewal. And there is no court of appeal from the F.C.C. decisions. This is one of the chief grievances of radio. But though the industry considers the Federal Communications Commission severe and calls Chairman McNinch "a hard-shell Baptist," the Commission has until recently been pretty lenient. Except for the uncertainty in the six months' license period, the broadcasters have little to complain about.

Some of the broadcasting chains exercise a much stricter censorship than that of the F.C.C. Columbia Broadcasting and National Broadcasting have almost the same rules. N.B.C. doesn't like

. . . Unpleasant or gruesome statements . . . aggressive, unduly emphatic manner . . . Controversial subjects for commer-

cial programs . . . The use of the Deity's name except when used reverently or as part of a standard classic work. Statements or suggestions offensive to religious views or racial traits . . . False or questionable statements . . . Obscene and off-color songs or jokes, oaths, sacrilegious expressions . . .

They say that

Testimonials must reflect the genuine experience or opinion of a competent witness. Dramatized commercials, when involving statements by doctors, dentists, druggists, nurses or other professional persons must be read by living members of these professions reciting actual experiences, or explanation must be clearly made by the announcer that the scenes enacted are fictitious.

It seems to me that I have heard several of these rules broken over and over again.

Since the Mae West incident, the National Broadcasting Company has grown especially strict. *Variety* (Mar. 23, 1938) says in its vivid language that they

Smote Metro on a piece of dialog with Strangler Lewis in the guest spot. Line which drew the blue pencil from continuity acceptance department of network had to do with the question "did you lose your equilibrium?", to which the rassler replied, "I didn't even know it was uncovered." N.B.C. monitors said no go but Metro insisted there was nothing suggestive. Benton & Bowles agency was called in and backed up N.B.C. That settled the controversy. Offending line was made to read "I didn't know it was gone."

Able advertising men themselves think that harsher rules for radio programs would be good business. Here are some suggestions made by Roy S. Durstine: ¹

¹ *Printers' Ink*, May 23, 1935.

Exclude programs advertising laxatives, cures for skin diseases, and other bodily disorders unsuitable for dinner table conversation.

Continue to keep hard liquor off the air.

Eliminate fake testimonials.

Pay higher salaries to announcers.

Some of these are in effect. There is no liquor advertising on radio, and the laxatives are off N.B.C. and Columbia networks. But the fake testimonials, the frightening children's programs, the skin disease cures, run right along.¹

And there is still plenty of patent medicine on both chains and local stations. Alka-Seltzer, Castoria, Peruna, Krazy Krystals, are all running along fluently. Ex-Lax when driven from the major networks went to the Mutual Broadcasting System. As the competition for the good hours on radio increases, the quality of goods advertised will grow more respectable. But on unpopular hours, on local stations or smaller networks, the patent medicines are likely to flourish for some time to come.

At best, you can't cover everything by any set of rules. What rule could stop a trick like that played on a criminal named Martin Durkin on the Palmolive-Peet hour in "Gang-busters"? This program dramatized actual criminal careers. But, says *Time* (Aug. 30, 1937):

Last week dapper little Martin J. ("Marty") Durkin, known in his gunning heyday as "The Sheik" and now in his twelfth year of a 35-year term in Joliet (Ill.) Penitentiary for killing a Federal agent in Chicago in 1925, was announced as the principal character in the "Gang-busters" weekly dramatization.

¹ The most powerful station in America is WLW, owned by Powell Crosley, Jr., President of Crosley Radio Corporation, who also owns Cincinnati Reds, and, according to *Fortune*, "makes a semi-humorous gesture by keeping *The Red Network*, by Mrs. Elizabeth Dilling," on his table.

"They've got no right to use my misfortune to peddle soap," said Lawyer Irving S. Roth for Convict Durkin, eligible for parole in seven more months.

Mr. Roth went to court for an injunction. Hastily Benton & Bowles, the advertising agency, dropped the Durkin story. No criminal has any legal protection against publication of the facts of his conviction, but there is an Illinois statute making it unlawful to show criminal or deformed persons for gain. The poor devil lost his injunction. Whereupon Benton & Bowles hurriedly got out a triumphant release praising freedom of speech in commercial broadcasting, and Durkin's biography was announced once more. All that muck just to sell a few tubes of shaving cream. It is pleasant to think that as a sales effort it was probably a failure.

In spite of these rules and censorship, the commercials on the air are even less reliable than printed advertising. The main broadcasting chains have about the same standard as the better magazines. Some local stations are about as good, but as a whole are on about the level of a cheap newspaper twenty-five years ago—and that's pretty bad.

Needless to say, radio is bitter in its feeling toward the Federal Communications Commission. What radio would like is permanent licenses, a local tax, a supreme court in each state to pass on licenses and disputed points. This is the usual states' rights demand of industry which has found that it can handle state courts and legislatures more easily than national ones. What the radio industry and advertising business fears at the moment more than anything else is government ownership. They assure me that there is a real likelihood that this may come, and soon. Bitterly they say, "Look what power that gives any political party that's in! They could censor anything! They could stop any op-

ponents!" And when I answer to this in a small voice, "But can't the advertiser stop anything and censor anything today?" they look at me suspiciously—and that source of supply for facts is closed to me.

The industry is fighting off national ownership in two ways. It is, as fast as possible, building up an investment. *Fortune* says the industry has invested about \$225,000,000 in equipment, land, and buildings. The government could legally stop all licenses at the end of their six months' period, but radio would claim that that would be confiscatory because it would throw its investment into the discard. The second method is to leave the air waves open to all kinds of opinion.

In spite of the censorship of advertisers, radio in the United States is at present much more free in expression of opinion than either newspapers or magazines. For that you can thank the Federal Communications Commission and the six months' license periods. No article by Norman Thomas or John Lewis or Earl Browder has got into the *Saturday Evening Post* or the *Woman's Home Companion*, but plenty of radio talks by these men and others like them can be heard over radio. The League for Industrial Democracy and the American Civil Liberties Union talk freely over the air, but neither *Good Housekeeping* nor *Collier's Weekly* has had an article praising them or written by them. The Socialist Party tells its story over radio. Can you imagine it in *Cosmopolitan* or *Liberty*? Naturally, none of these names appear on commercial programs. In this liberal use of radio, Columbia, because of brilliant ability at the top, was the leader, but N.B.C. has now caught up with it. This policy is allowed and even encouraged by the big chains to prove to the Federal Communications Commission that the air is free to all expression of opinion.

24. KID SHOWS

BELLS of joy are ringing in the advertising world over the discovery of the little children. Of course, advertisers have always known that the children were there. Many of them have children themselves. But not that kind of children. These are children in graphs, in diagrams, in statistics, in sales talks—children as a market.

Jubilant advertisers know now that the Paid Piper can play almost any tune and the children will come dancing along, pushing and hurrying, tugging at Father's coat, "Buy this, daddy! Uncle Don says it will make me strong!"—pulling at Mother's skirt, "Hurry up, mummy! Dick Tracy says I can join his club!" "But hurry, hurry, or I'll be too late!"

There has always been some advertising to children. Here and there a manufacturer thought that if he could start the boys and girls young, he'd have them as customers when they grew up. But it doesn't work. The children with whom I grew up collected picture cards from Sweet Caporal cigarettes, but they don't smoke them now.

That is old stuff. The new discovery has nothing to do with what the children are going to do later on. It's what they're going to do *now*. And it depends on the use of the "child salesman." "What Junior wants, Mother buys," ad-says one of the radio chains. Railroad companies, steamship lines, airplanes, gasoline and oil—these all plead with Junior and Sister. For them manufacturers are making "ensembles,

correct underclothes, accessories marked with initials or insignia.”¹ J. H. Mitchell, agency head, used to advertise Minneapolis Knitting Mills exclusively to mothers. Now he’s learned that beginning at eight years for girls and at ten for boys the child is “style-conscious.”²

It’s so easy. The children believe everything they’re told. A nice way of putting it: “The natural enthusiasm of youth is an important factor which acts in favor of any manufacturer appealing to boys and girls.”³

In 1935 fifty-eight of the leading food advertisers spent \$38,000,000 on newspaper, magazine, and radio advertising to children. Of this the bulk went to radio for “kid shows.” The success has been a heady one; many a manufacturer is a little drunk with it. The agency salesman faces the board of directors with a good plan to sell an automobile, but gets a cold reception. “No!” says the president. “Let’s have a kid show.” “But not for an automobile!” protests the agency man. “Sure, why not?” a director breaks in. “My children are crazy about the radio and what they say goes with me.”

There are five large ways “to get the kids” or, if you’d rather, “reach the juvenile market”—children’s magazines, 4-H clubs, the comic strip, the schools, and radio. Of these, by far the greatest is radio.

A dozen or so of children’s magazines have a circulation of about 2,000,000. The better ones take only publishers’ and school advertising. But “the major group of juveniles,” says E. Evalyn Grumbine, editor of *Child Life*, “accepts

¹ E. Evalyn Grumbine in *Reaching Juvenile Markets*.

² *Op. cit.*

³ *Op. cit.*

campaigns of all types suitable for magazines read by children and their parents."

Some of the campaigns are good both in themselves and for the children. Really charming is that of the Hardware Mutual Casualty Company, which shows children driving their toy wagons as lessons in safety. Another good one is the modernized house promoted by *Child Life* magazine and the General Electric Company. The basement as a recreation room for the children, low hooks for their clothes, built-in boxes for their toys—this is all right, though a trial to parents who haven't the money for built-in boxes or fixed-up basements, and hard on poor children who can't own them.

Still, it's a good lesson for them, too. They may as well learn young how to do without things. Besides, it gives them an ideal to reach to, especially as the Curtis Publishing Company helps boys develop into "a happy successful manhood" by selling the *Saturday Evening Post* for five cents. Newspapers also develop salesmanship in boys so that they can earn money to buy all the fine things they see advertised.

The 4-H clubs are made up of farm boys and girls, a million of them between ten and twenty years of age. Their symbol is a four-leaf clover with an H on each leaf, meaning four-square development of head, heart, hand and health. The clubs were first organized with the encouragement of the Department of Agriculture to keep the boys and girls on the farm and combat the drawing power of the cities. This was to be done by making better farmers through lectures and contests. The idea was excellent. After the war, there was a shortage of money among the 4-H clubs and private manufacturers contributed prizes and

other help for contests—also cash. Montgomery Ward & Company ran contests for girls in new methods of canning, dress designing and interior decorating. Armour's was probably the first contest among the 4-H boys and girls, but other meat packers followed on. Westinghouse had a national 4-H rural electrification program. The Kerr Glass Manufacturing Company has a yearly National 4-H Canning Achievement Contest, over which Mrs. Grumbine grows enthusiastic:

. . . the author could not help but speculate on the extent of the new markets created by this tremendous activity participated in by 211,000 girls, who canned in 1936 7,408,000 jars of food. How many jars, how much sugar, how many stoves, how much fuel, how many pressure cookers and other canning utensils and accessories were sold to these girls and at what prices . . . ?¹

The advertiser who wants to use these clubs can reach them through state departments of agriculture, but he must first have the O.K. of the club leader of his own state agricultural college. You can see that as a market the 4-H clubs would be superb.

It is strange that it took advertisers so long to come to the comic strip. Hearst claims that through "Puck," his comic supplement, he reaches "36,000,000 juveniles." The 1930 census shows only 36,000,000 people between 5 and 19 in the United States. But maybe Hearst counts in the grown-up juveniles who also respond to the ads. Prices for space in "Puck" in full color are high (\$20,000 a page for back cover and \$18,000 for inside page), and they're worth the money. The results have been almost unbelievable.

¹ *Reaching Juvenile Markets.*

"Puck" is the chief of the comic strip media, and there is a long string of others. But the editors are bothered. It would be fine to have the comic sections all paid ads, but their readers would fade away. It takes skill to balance the pages so that they will carry all the paid ad comics that the public will stand.

Premiums, clubs, badges—all the folderol of radio advertising is also used in the comic strip. Tom Mix in a full-page comic tells the boys that Ralston is a "Real Western cereal," and all the suppressed cowboys in the land demand Ralston cereal at once.

Free samples, slides in the motion picture theatres, and comic strips made children spend their pennies for 200,000,000 Tootsie Rolls in one year.

Inspector Post organized the Junior Detective Corps for General Foods, and within four months more than 500,000 children were running around as detectives with badges, studying manuals on observation, tracking, secret writing—and sending in two Post Toasties package tops. These ardent educational efforts to turn children into snoopers are queer. But they probably don't go very deep, and most of the harm done is to make 500,000 children eat too much cereal. General Foods dropped the campaign after a couple of years. Whether the children lost interest in snooping or the mothers objected, I don't know. It is even possible that General Foods was ashamed of itself.

Comic strip ads are direct and crude. Advertising through the schools has to be more subtle. Some educators are worried about it. The California Commission for the Study of Educational Problems says:

It has always been a fundamental principle of American education that the schools must protect their children from ex-

ploitation; that no interest shall be permitted directly, or indirectly, to advertise in the classroom. The commission regrets to report that this principle is being flagrantly violated in many California schools and that the regular work of the children is being interrupted, largely because modern schools of advertising have insinuated themselves into the school system.¹

But individual teachers often like these "advertising helps." The naïve ones are fooled as much as are the children. Others less naïve like the "advertising helps" as an easy way to fill time. Besides, some of the material sent out by corporations like General Electric and Metropolitan Life is all right.

Mrs. Grumbine advises manufacturers not to send a bald advertisement. Even if a teacher wants to show it, the school officials will not allow her to. She's got to throw it in the waste-basket. Advertising to get into the schools must be tied into the curriculum, and must be graded for different classes.

The advertiser has to send representatives to call on superintendents, supervisors, and principals. He must advertise in teachers' publications. He'd better send letters to county superintendents and circularize the teachers themselves directly.

It is easier to sell to children in rural districts than in small towns, because they have less access to libraries. Also, the schools are poorer and glad to get outside material. The larger the city, the harder it becomes. New York children are hardest of all to move, and the New York City school system utterly immune.

The shrewd advertiser will introduce his product indi-

¹ 40,000,000 Guinea Pig Children, by Rachel Lynn Palmer and Isadore M. Alpher.

rectly. He will show by pictures, models, and even movies the history of a product. For instance, to put over a brand of sugar, there'll be the story of the growing of sugar cane and sugar beets, the slow growth of sugar in the diet in the course of history. Into this he'll slip mentions of his own name. Crystal Domino does something of this sort.

Lifebuoy sends samples and the teacher gives a star at the end of the week for the hands that are washed most frequently. Samples of shampoos made all the children wash their hair. The teacher who had been annoyed by unwashed heads and hands would have a human gratitude for such help.

Much of this material is sent out by an organization called Homemakers Educational Alliance. It's an alliance of advertisers—but the other two words, “homemakers” and “educational,” sound fine. Another outfit, Educational Foundations, gives schools a model store with packages of advertised goods. Advertisers pay \$10,000 to put a product on the shelves of the model store.

The utilities have been and are enthusiastic users of school advertising. The California Fruit Growers Exchange works through domestic science teachers who are ready to believe that oranges are good for everybody. The Exchange sends colored wall charts that show how oranges are grown and their place in history. And it's easy to work in hints about how children who drink orange juice grow strong and healthy.¹

But these four methods of reaching the children, big as some of them are, are trifles compared to the glory of the

¹ Any school, teacher, or child can have free *Consumers Guide*, published by the Department of Agriculture at Washington, D. C., an excellent publication.

kid show on the air. The advertisers love it. But the children love it, too, and so do many of the mothers.

In 1928, there were three programs for children in the New York area. By 1934, this had jumped to fifty-two, exclusive of school broadcasts on national networks, and the number has been steadily rising. It is merely a matter of how many programs can be squeezed in when children can listen.

Of course, there have been complaints about programs. Most active was a group of mothers in Scarsdale. They didn't care much about seeing their children frightened or having them learn peculiar ways of behavior. It must have been somewhat discouraging to these Scarsdale women when they took a vote among their children to learn that they liked the thrillers best. "I want a blood-curdling murder," wrote one. The mothers voted for news and historical. Only on Eddie Cantor did both groups agree.¹

Other women's groups complained. Some objected strenuously to the advertisers of Tasty Yeast who tried to make children eat three chocolate-covered yeast candies a day.²

The first answer to such protests was ridicule. This seems strange. It sounds incredibly foolish for an advertiser to insist on running a program mothers detest. Why fight against the mothers and their clubs? Surely it would have been wiser to keep the friendship of the mother while they were enticing the child. But I think we would find, if we investigated, that the clubs and the mothers who com-

¹ *Time*, March 13, 1933.

² Complaint of a father: "If a neighbor said to my kid, 'Here's a fine shotgun. Get your dad to buy it for you,' I'd throw him out. But these radio guys—"

plained were few in proportion to the huge army of women who either didn't care or who liked the poor programs as much as their children did.

The protests of the Federal Communications Commission worked better. They didn't like highly dramatic programs as bed-time stories. So finally most of these came off the air. Radio advertisers say this shows how strict is the censorship of the F.C.C. But other things just as bad seem to get away from the F.C.C.

Most effective was the Women's National Radio Council. Columbia cleaned up its children's radio department. N.B.C. followed. Mutual is still bad. At last in 1936 the networks got busy. Says *Tide* (Nov. 1, 1936): "N.B.C. has a Department of Continuity Acceptance; C.B.S. a commercial editorial and staff child psychologist; Mutual has copy clean-up announcements. Agencies moved up to the place of Villain Number One on the Women's National Radio Committee list. Some of them made a few abortive peace gestures." Batten, Barton, Durstine & Osborn gathered a group of housewives for an audition, had them select a new commercial program. Another agency retained a child psychologist, but it never went much further. The agency on Swift & Company's Sunbrite Cleanser asked on a broadcast for critical comment on the program from mothers, and then did as the mothers suggested. The same Sunbrite people engaged Angelo Patri as script supervisor. Also, Dr. Angell of Yale conducted a Children's Educational Program for N.B.C.

Columbia Broadcasting now has rules against making heroes of gangsters, criminals and racketeers. It bars disrespect for parents or authority. It refuses praise to greed, cruelty and selfishness, to unfair exploitation of others, to

dishonesty and deceit. Because of these rules, Columbia threw out the Dick Tracy program sponsored by California Syrup of Figs. The program went right back on Station WOR of Mutual Broadcasting.¹

Altogether the programs are better than they used to be. This isn't only because of the protests. The almost incredible commercial success of such decent shows as that of "Singing Lady," "Let's Pretend," and "School of the Air," has taught advertisers something.

Local programs are still bad, full of blood and thunder. Among the worst are the ones in which the children themselves play a part. They do imitations of Fannie Brice, Mae West, Dorothy Lamour—repulsive, sexy stuff. They also imitate gangsters and villains. These children are thoroughly exploited and become quickly hard-boiled and old for their age.²

Parents have wondered why the children's programs usually come between 4:30 and 6:00 in the afternoon. Older children don't like these hours, especially in summer. They'd rather, if they could, listen in the evening right after supper. The reason is simple. Late afternoon time was a loss to the stations. Advertisers didn't want it. The first children's programs were merely meant to fill in the lost time. Then came the boom. And now the children cheerfully give up the late daylight hours of play they used to fight for so bitterly. The mother is pleased—when supper's ready, they're right there for it. No more arguing to get them away from the last few minutes of play outside.

The mother likes radio because it saves her bother. It keeps the child off the street, keeps him contented. No,

¹ *Not to Be Broadcast*, by Ruth Brindze.

² Dorothy Gordon in the *San Francisco Monitor*.

longer is she pestered by "Tell me a story!" She is usually too grateful to find much fault. As for the children, they are simply enthralled, entranced. Never before could they find anyone with patience to tell them the endless stories they want to hear.

It's easy to slip in the sales talk with the story. You can sell children anything through fiction. When I was a child, Quaker Oats advertised simply in children's magazines. That didn't move me. I loathed oatmeal. Then I read that the children in Louisa Alcott's *Rose in Bloom* all got round and rosy when they ate their morning oatmeal. And I had to have it too. Until almost too late I believed Louisa Alcott when she said that all a girl needed to dress like a lady was fresh gloves, a fresh handkerchief, and neat shoes.

Children begin to like the radio when they're about four. The age limits are between four and thirteen. Dorothy Gordon, who appeared in the Child's School of the Air, says that she has done programs which appealed to babies two years old, little games and songs where the children sing along. Children of four to six listen with a mother or other adult, which increases the ad-audience. The peak of enthusiasm seems to come at about ten. The programs go bumping on while the children are studying, while they're playing games, while they're reading. Some inner listening voice tells them when to stop and listen more carefully.

The best study made so far of children and radio was done by Dr. Azrael Eisenberg (Columbia University Press). The book has become a sort of Bible to advertisers for big city children. All his investigations took place in New York. Some of the Yes and No of radio programs which he found—

For

" . . . the radio does provide much wholesome recreation. . . . It has proved to be an instrument of culture. To children it has brought, so delightfully as to be sure of acceptance, the dramatic march of world events, the greatest drama and music and literature of all ages."

Against

Bad reactions include nightmares, children "who break down and weep in the middle of a radio story," or "scream in fright and turn off the radio or stop their ears. . . ."

The children examined in grammar schools and a few Junior High schools said that the radio taught them:

To be good and do good things	Stealing
To be honest	Mischievousness
To be obedient to parents	Fright
To be kind	Nightmares
To be helpful to others	Staying up late
To be careful	Drinking coffee
To be cheerful and pleasant	Thinking about murders and mystery
To be well-mannered	Playing with guns
To be kind to animals	Buying poor or disliked products
To be brave	Imitating crooks
To be adventurous	Running away from home
To be sportsmanlike	Lying
To be friendly	
To brush their teeth	

Other things they learned were to

Drink Ovaltine
 Eat cereals
 Drink milk
 Drink Cocomalt
 Eat H. O. Oats
 Eat advertised foods
 Eat Wheaties

Eat vegetables
Chew gum

Lists like this have filled the dietitian with despair. Too much bread, too much cereal, too much sugar, too much processed food, too much cocoa, say the experts.

Boys and girls like about the same programs. The exceptions are Orphan Annie for girls and Buck Rogers for boys. Mystery, crime, and detectives are more popular with boys. The girls like a bit of sentiment. The most appealing child in Mr. Eisenberg's book is a little Italian boy who turned on the dial to escape from his troubles: "I like comedy programs because after my mother scolds me for doing something wrong I go upstairs, turn on the radio, and end my worries. If I had my way I would have more funny programs on the air because everybody could end their worries." A little girl is a dead giveaway on many grown-up listeners to Bing Crosby. "I like to hear him sing," she says. "You'd never think he was a married man."

The local program is as successful on kid shows as it is on grown-up radio. The Stone Baking Company in Atlanta was, I am told, planning to abandon a plant because of bad business. They had been using radio for some time but with no luck. Then they put on a kid show and "hit a jackpot." There were playlets with children playing the roles, games, clubs, and a story about a fresh kid and the jams he got in and out of—also plenty of blood and adventure.

On local programs birthday clubs are popular, and child amateurs. In Russia, where there are more children's programs than here, no child is allowed to play the part of a grown-up. In fairy tales, for instance, a child may not play the part of king or queen. No child is allowed to play

twice, so that the children, while they express a natural instinct for acting, cannot be developed into unpleasant little professionals.

The commercial on a kid show is pathetically easy. Grown people turn the dial off when the sales talk begins. Children do not. On the kid show you can't be subtle. Straight command is best, sometimes gentle, when the kind voice suggests, "Ask Mother now—" more directly—"now, boys and girls," or when on the Ralston program Tom Mix grows real jolly:

And now, straightshooters, I'll be a pink-eyed prairie dog if you won't go plumb loco about this Ralston Wheat Cereal. It's the tastiest, most delectable, delicious cereal you ever tried. Why, each and every Ralston package is as plumb bursting with cowboy energy as a cow hand's broncho. Why, you'll get more kick out of it than a forty-five. . . . Tell your mother to get Ralston. It's the top hand of cereals to keep you in top-hand condition.¹

In the excitement of the chase, the commercial sometimes loses its head altogether—or maybe not its head, rather its heart or its sense of decency, or whatever you want to call it.

The Jack Armstrong Club (General Mills) had a shrewd idea: "Let's get 'em to send in to help Jack out of a pinch." There's of course no real Jack Armstrong. The believing child heard that "Jack himself is in a pinch right now. His mother has simply got to have an operation, and there's only one way he can get the money to have it done. So you'll be doing Jack a mighty big favor if you join his stamp club right away. The quicker you join, the better it will be for Jack and his mother." The believing

¹ 40,000,000 Guinea Pig Children.

child, full of pity and eager to help, got his mother to buy an extra package of Wheaties. The Federal Trade Commission didn't like that one and General Mills had to stop it. But by that time the extra cereal had been sold and eaten.

Threats also work well—the hero will die or the program will go away or—but if you're willing to play this game you can think of plenty of variations for yourself.

If you're planning a kid show, there's no use going ahead on it with just a good story or a good hero. It isn't enough to have a product that children would gladly send their pennies for. In a kid show you can't sell even chocolate candy straight. You've got to give something free.

Radio has turned this country from "the land of the free to the land of the absolutely free."¹ Better still, have a club. The best kind of club is a secret society. You can add excitement by running a contest. The most successful all-around kid shows then have fiction, premiums, clubs and contests.

All the fine premiums which your children get you're paying for.²

Sometimes you pay for the price of the premium directly, as when you send ten or twenty-five cents for mailing cost or some other excuse. You may even, in such a case, be paying a profit on the give-away. More than one advertiser has actually made money on the ten cents that the customers send to cover mailing cost.

¹ Alsa Landon Root in *Parent-Teachers' Magazine*.

² A speaker before the Chicago Federated Advertising Club: "Premium advertising is based on the economic fact that the customers pay for all advertising; that its cost is just as much a part of the purchase price of merchandise as the raw material and the labor that enters into its manufacture."—40,000,000 *Guinea Pig Children*.

Heinz had a huge success with a miniature of its regular delivery trucks. All the child had to do was to buy any three Heinz products and hand over fifty-seven cents extra for the "free" truck. More than a million trucks were sold in five months. That, if you noticed, means \$570,000.

Especially shrewd was Campana when it made the mother feel that she was justified in buying cosmetics because for empty cartons she got gifts for her children.

Coca-Cola offered a "\$5.00 baby doll" for \$1.95 and twelve empty Coca-Cola bottles. Well, you can buy a pretty nice doll at any store for \$1.95!

The generous-hearted advertiser plays his Santa Claus role in all kinds of gushy speeches. The lead medal for these ought to go to Clyde Beatty on Quaker Wheat Crackels:

When I was a kid I always wanted to play circus. So I've arranged to send thousands of boys and girls the swell circus gifts shown here. Look!—included are animals trainers' whips, lion-head rings, animal bracelets, and a book that tells you how to put on your own circus! You don't have to pay a penny for any of these gifts. Just pick out those you want, and see to it that your family enjoys delicious Quaker Crackels. Then save the box tops and send them to me. Use the coupon below. Better tear it out now so you won't forget!"

And so the "presents" drop into the children's eager hands—baseball equipment, ponies, miniature theatres, puppies, bicycles.

But more seductive than the plain premium is the club, or tribe, or secret society. What child can resist the idea of belonging to a club? Both are really old selling tricks, although fairly new to most children.

About 1908 the *Ladies' Home Journal* started something called "The Girls' Club," run as a regular editorial column

but really a circulation stunt. It was a ladylike way to make the girls get subscriptions. The girls were all ages—from fifteen to sixty. The scheme went so well that the *Woman's Home Companion* hired me to start a similar "club," and later I did the same job for *Pictorial Review*. On the *Woman's Home Companion* we called it the *Pin Money Club*. The scheme was the same, but we added a little trimming. When a *Ladies' Home Journal* girl got twenty-five subscriptions, she received a swastika brooch. When our girl turned in twenty-five subscriptions we gave her a gold brooch, too, but we also made her a member of a secret society which we called The Inner Circle. It is astounding what delight those girls took in being admitted to the "secret" group.

There were other gifts. Photographs, trips to New York, this and that. But they were only "gifts" for use in our advertising matter. This is the way it was worked. We didn't call our members agents. We called them *Pin Money Girls*. They didn't earn commissions—they got gifts. Say that the ordinary commission to an agent was 35 cents for a year's subscription. For the *Pin Money Girls* we figured 25 cents on a subscription, which they got in cash. The other 10 cents was used as a credit toward an Inner Circle pin or other "present."

That, much simplified, is the idea of the children's radio clubs. As a rule, the child doesn't have to sell anything to become a member—merely has to make its mother buy a box of something or other. To get the children into your club, you must give a premium, have an impressive list of rules, supply a badge or a symbol and a secret password (a secret known to millions of children). As initiation fee, the child has to send a box top or a label or, as in Jimmy Allen's

Flying Club, he's got to go to a Richfield Oil station to join. Of course, when mamma and papa take him there, they buy some gas. That is ideal co-operation between the club and the child and the advertiser.

The badge for the secret society can sometimes be a "sacred Scarab," or a good luck charm, or a rabbit's foot. Educators are worried by this superstitious rigmarole. But the children who long ago learned voodoo charms and listened to stories of Raw Head and Bloody Bones seem to have come through without any more superstitions than the rest of us.

An extra touch is to make the child sell the club to other children. The child who got three new members, each with an Ovaltine seal, for Orphan Annie's Club received a "lucky piece." The new member received a bronze pin and a booklet, if she wanted it. For additional seals she could get a signet ring or a birthstone ring. Hugely popular was the Orphan Annie Identification Bureau. That got the boys too. For one seal a boy or girl got an oval-shaped identification tag and chain with initials and an identification number. Parents liked this. If a child was lost, headquarters could find out the name and address by using the identification number.

The secret password is almost as effective with small children as the premium. Where children have all the toys they want, can buy what they please or get what they ask for, the password works the best magic. "My girl friend and I are members of Orphan Annie's Secret Society," a little girl told me. "We have a secret password between us." Her eyes shone as she looked up at me. "I say X-1 X-2 to her, and then she knows what I mean. And none of the other children can know what we're talking about!"

She's nine years old and very credulous, perhaps because she's never had a chance to try any of the advertised products or send for any of the premiums. Her mother doesn't approve of cereals or Ovaltine or Cocomalt and won't let her have any. But she has no interest in the product itself; she managed to join Orphan Annie's Secret Society, and that satisfied her. "Mother says the Ovaltine is bad for me; but they say it will make you strong and healthy." "Do you believe it will make you strong and healthy?" I asked. "I don't know. I don't care! I'm in Orphan Annie's Secret Society." When I asked her what Wheaties were, she answered with assurance, "It's the food of champeens."

Junior G-Men Corps is now out. Perhaps G-Men didn't like the use of the name. Anyway, it's now the Melvin Purvis "Law-and-Order Patrol." The members are called secret operators and have codes and passwords and equipment. All over America Melvin Purvis's secret operators are working with him "for law and order." Melvin Purvis probably finds the children easier to pursue than Dillinger.

The Hot Cereal Breakfast Club is pretty firm in its attitude toward the children. It makes sure that they've eaten the Cream of Wheat and no nonsense. The company sends a recording chart and some gold stars. When the child eats the hot cereal for breakfast, the mother pastes a star on the chart. At the end of the month, the chart goes back to the company, and if there are enough stars there is a membership badge, with the "degree of Chevalier." The second month he becomes an officer, the third month a grand officer. Orphan Annie uses a similar chart.

In one case the club was started by the boys and girls themselves. Cocomalt uses Buck Rogers in a serial story

placed in the twenty-fifth century. Books and weight charts were the premiums. The children got so excited over the story that they themselves started the Buck Rogers Club for boys and the Wilma Deering Club for girls.

Then there are the contests. The prizes are figured in like other premiums, either into the cost of product or the cost of advertising. Years ago the Curtis Publishing Company and Crowell Publishing Company had famous pony contests where a pony and other prizes were substituted for agents' commissions. This was hard work for the children. The modern prize contests are much easier. They get the children to find hidden figures in pictures, write a letter, take photographs, do a drawing, color a print, assemble a jig-saw puzzle, get a name for a product, prepare scrapbooks, or a jingle. A fine one is the giving of prizes for the largest number of labels or box tops.

The Chevrolet Motor Company's All-American Soap Box Derby was really amusing. As you will no doubt remember, boys built their own little wagons. The first prize was a big one—a four-year scholarship at any state college or university. A contest like this wouldn't sell any Chevrolet cars directly. It would merely get the parents' friendship and plenty of free publicity.

Orphan Annie ran a contest for a name for Ovaltine. In preparing the beverage, the milk has to be shaken up with the Ovaltine crystals. Many of the children sent in the same suggestion in the contest: "Call it Orphan Annie's Chocolate Throw-Up Drink. Please send me the \$200."

It is important in the contests to give every single child some sort of prize. Naturally the prizes to the losers are trivial and annoying. Mrs. Root, whom I quoted before, said that the lure of contests was tantalizing and heart-

breaking. "You can't possibly fail," promised the announcer, and her child pleaded, "Can't we try it, mother? He says we can't fail." But all she got was a little tin penny whistle. Bitter was the child's disappointment when it wouldn't even blow.

How can such prize contests have a permanent good sales effect? But perhaps the advertiser doesn't expect a permanent effect. All he wants to do is sell a little extra this year.

I wonder if ten years from now some of these advertisers may not look back a little sadly on their success: When the "dear kiddies" grow up, they may be so hard-boiled that they will be completely impenetrable toward advertising. Once you start to bribe, there's no limit.

The kid show is new and we can't tell when the child will begin to grow a shell against the ads. The brighter the youngster, the quicker the disillusion. Quickest will be the brilliant child in the big city household. Mrs. Grumbine says that children from seven to nine aren't old enough to be disappointed, disillusioned, or skeptical. The story of one child and his radio enthusiasm seems to contradict her.

He lives in New York, is nine years old and has been listening to the radio for about six months. His mother gave him no instructions, let him do just as he liked. He has now become a member of Dick Tracy's and some other club. First thing that happened was that he wanted to eat Force. He had never eaten cereal before; his mother, the wife of a physician, doesn't believe much in cereals. But he wanted to eat Force so he could grow big and strong. Also he had to have the box tops. She bought him Force. He ate it for a while. Then he listened to other programs, and decided that perhaps Ralston would make him stronger and

bigger. For a while he ate Ralston's. He switched to two or three other cereals, all of which promised to make him big and strong.

After a few weeks of this, he said to his mother, "I don't want any more of them, because how can that be? If they all say it makes you big and strong, then I don't believe any of them."

Mrs. Root's little girl also soon reached the point where she snapped off the announcer in the middle of a word—and did it always with an air of triumph. These are brighter children than most. What happened to them in a few months is likely to happen to most others in a year or two. The advertiser may find that he is destroying the market that he considers so precious.

Roughly, the kid show is addressed to 20,000,000 children between four and thirteen. But there is still the "Unspoiled" Market of 4,000,000 children under a year old.

25. CONGRESS SAYS "BOO"

TUGWELL was the advertisers' special bogey man. His food and drug bill frightened them into panic. It was a good bill—and drastic.¹ Industry, advertising, and publishers combined to fight it. As in all such fights, the patent medicine cohorts stood boldly in the van. "Counter-attack!" challenged *Drug World*. "Today, proprietary manufacturers are, comparatively speaking, in the same desperate position as the Allies occupied in that fated Spring of 1918. And for this reason they may well profit from the example of the Allies in those dark days."

Tormented, twisted, and starved, the poor Tugwell bill lay down in committee with a great illness. After the fever had passed, it rose once more, but without hair or teeth, a queer, tottering, mindless thing called the Copeland bill. The Copeland bill applied to packaging, to claims on labels and advertising. But it carried no penalties, no definitions, no provisions for court appeal. Even within its own limits, it was practically worthless—a mere skeleton of a bill. Under it the Department of Agriculture would have had to hold a special hearing about any silly little detail—can this colored matter be used in a food? is that label an exaggeration? does this drug contain injurious products? is that can full-size?

Any manufacturer or druggist could appeal in the courts

¹ Tide showed a copy writer at the phone, "I get it, Mr. Tugwell. You just want us to say 'pretty good molasses at fairly reasonable prices.'"

to enjoin the Department on any one of these trifles. Naturally, the bad boys in the industry could and would bring action in one court of appeal after another to seek a judge who would O.K. an injunction. All this is so wasteful that I am told the Department of Agriculture would rather have had no bill than to see the Copeland bill enacted.

Yet originally the Copeland bill did contain one provision that scared advertisers. Censorship was taken away from the Federal Trade Commission and given to the Food and Drug Administration (Department of Agriculture). *Advertising & Selling*, a conservative advertising publication, says that Warren K. Burgess, president of a patent medicine company, wrote to the other patent medicine people that "Hell has broken loose in Washington," that the Food and Drug bill might pass, that the dynamite in it was the vesting of the regulation of advertising in the Food and Drug Administration,

"... the Food & Drug Administration would insist on advertising being in the same terms as employed on the label . . . If you think those [sic] kinds of advertisements will sell merchandise, and thus make advertising profitable, we predict a rude awakening for the advertising media of America. . . .

"These facts are well known and understood by the Federal Trade Commission, and that is why the Federal Trade Commission should continue to administer control of food, drug, and cosmetic advertising, as well as all other advertising."

The late Senator Copeland never was harsh with food or drug manufacturers.¹ Didn't he foresee the excitement? But by this time advertisers were anxious to get some kind of bill passed. The longer there was no law, the more "yell-

¹ Copeland was paid for appearing on radio programs of Fleischmann's Yeast, Nujol, Phillips' Milk of Magnesia, Eno's Salts.—*Consumers Union Report*, March, 1938.

ing and screaming" from the consumer organizations. Besides, stringent and even fantastic state bills were being enacted. Some of these laws are careless, but some, as in Minnesota and South Dakota, are excellent. Frank Blair, now dead, former president of the Proprietary Association, was the first medicine man astute enough to see the advantage of having some kind of bill. "Once passed, consumers will quiet down; there won't be so much agitation."

Ad-men had been walking on eggs with fear of the Food and Drug Administration censorship on labels, which has been competent and severe. But Mr. Blair was so bothered by the public protests that he was even willing to let the Food and Drug Administration have the ad-censoring. Anything—or almost anything—in order to get some bill passed and to quiet the public! It is said that he changed his mind and turned against the Food and Drug Administration because of Ruth Lamb's *American Chamber of Horrors*. "Anybody who thinks like that we don't want monkeying around with us." In other words, anybody who had harsh thoughts about proprietary medicines was a danger.

In the nick of time Congressman Lea of California came along with a bill that calmed the storm. Congressman Lea left the Copeland bill as a whole to fight its own way or to sleep in peace. But of the ad-censorship section he made a separate bill—took it away from the F. & D. A. and left it with the Federal Trade Commission. Industry sighed with relief, sat back and let the Lea bill pass into law in the spring of 1938.

The Copeland Act as passed later applies only to food and drugs. The Lea Act covers all advertising, but unfortunately strong provisions like the right of injunction against advertisers are confined to food, drugs and cosmetics. Liquor

is taken care of by the Federal Alcohol Administration. On other products you can go ahead with any kind of wild claims you like. Ad-men expect that the F.T.C. may, however, bear down harder on false advertising in other lines besides food and drugs, and be much more likely to hold the ad-agency responsible than it has done heretofore.

Under the Lea Act, only the advertiser himself is held responsible for breaking the law. Advertising agencies, publishers, and broadcasters slip out from under. No matter what is said in their columns or over the air, they pay no penalty. All this leaves publishers and broadcasters free; but it doesn't altogether let out the agency. Advertisers won't feel pleased with an agency which gets it in trouble with the Lea Act, even though the agency's only obeying the client's orders.

Until the passage of the Lea bill, the Federal Trade Commission had only a limited authority over advertising. It could place a cease and desist order on ads that showed unfair competition. Sometimes this could be stretched to cover statements that were untrue. For instance, if an advertiser claimed his product would do something and that no competitor's could do it, he was handing out unfair competition and incidentally he was lying to the customer.

But the Federal Trade Commission hasn't done all it could do even under its limited authority to clean up advertising. Both the *Rural New Yorker* and the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch* conduct a sharper censorship of advertisers than the F.T.C. The *St. Louis Post-Dispatch* claims that its censorship costs it hundreds of thousands of dollars a year in ads. They show an advertisement for infant food which they rejected as false in 1931. Not until 1937 did F.T.C. make the advertiser stop the claims. They rejected

yeast advertising because they feel its only justifiable claims are those of a mild laxative—rejected advertising of pure fruit juice with sugar added because it claimed to be reducing.¹

One advertising man said to me, "We just give the horse laugh to the Federal Trade Commission." This, I think, is typical advertising exaggeration. The F.T.C., mild as it is, has done some good, and it may do a good deal more.

Many agencies, unlike my cynical friend, are meticulously careful not to do anything which the Federal Trade Commission might not like. But these are bewildered by conflicting decisions. For instance, there is a deodorant named Arrid. It happens that at the moment there is a war on between two types of deodorant. X claims it is unhealthy to stop perspiration, lets you perspire but stops the odor. Y stops perspiration, argues that you don't want stains on your clothes. Arrid is the most successful of the deodorants at the moment, partly because it is a cream and easy to use, and partly because it claims that it safely stops perspiration. Under the old F.T.C. rules, nobody is allowed to make such a statement,² reflecting as it does on competitors' claims. More careful competitors are sitting up and wondering why the F.T.C. allows the other fellow, right or wrong, to say things which they cannot put over.

The more jittery the client, the more the agency fears the F.T.C. The client has to O.K. every piece of copy sent out, but if an ad brings a cease and desist order, many a

¹ *Editor & Publisher*, April 9, 1938.

² Of course a remedy that stops perspiration is not truly a deodorant, but is loosely so called by the trade. Some doctors say that it does no harm to stop perspiration in one or two spots on the body since it will come out in some other place. Of course, total stoppage of perspiration would be fatal. Other doctors say you must not stop perspiration, even in one spot.

client will pass the buck to the agency anyway. Kellogg's Bran was cited for saying something that the F.T.C. didn't like. Blaming the agency, Kellogg's took the account away, gave it to another agency whose advertising is much worse. Bran has been attacked over and over again in the *Journal of the American Medical Association*, *Health & Hygiene*, and other places, as a dangerous and imitation food. But Kellogg's new ads said, "This running in to take a pill is bad business. Tomorrow we will have some All-Bran Muffins." The pill makers leaped up in rage. Will the F.T.C. also leap up in rage, and will Kellogg then pass the buck again and move to a third agency?

Even Advertising & Selling had bitter things to say about the F.T.C. and its inadequate policing. In 1936 the Food and Drug Administration had forced the Home Drug Company to change its labels, whereupon the Federal Trade Commission ordered the company to

cease and desist from representing that its Prescription No. 69 "will cause gallstones in the human body to be dissolved or that it will cause gallstones to be evacuated or that it will relieve or cure diseases or pathological conditions of the gall bladder. . . ."

Fine. But eight months later, Home Drug was still making the same claims.

Next, F.T.C. forbade Creomulsion to represent directly or by inference that the use of Creomulsion would prevent pneumonia or flu. A year and a half later, in October, 1936, Creomulsion ad-said:

"DOCTORS GIVE CREOMULSION FOR DANGEROUS COUGHS. Thousands of doctors use Creomulsion for colds and coughs in their own families as well as in their practice, knowing how danger-

ous it would be to let them hang on . . . Creomulsion effectively relieves coughs and colds. . . ."

In its annual report for 1932, F.T.C. boasted that it had ordered the Gold Medal Haarlem Oil Company ads cleaned up. Almost four years later, the Capsules were being advertised thus:

"Poisoned Kidneys. . . . To harmlessly flush poisons and acids from kidneys and correct irritation of bladder so that you can 'stop getting up nights' get a 35-cent package of Gold Medal Haarlem Oil Capsules and take as directed. Other symptoms of kidney and bladder weaknesses are scant, burning, or smarting passage—backache—leg cramps—puffy eyes."

There is a long list of such nonsensical gestures that lead nowhere. That is why advertisers aren't worried about the Lea Act. They think it is saving them from the grave perils of the Food and Drug Administration blue pencils, and moreover it makes the clamoring customers think that something has been done for them. Maybe something has been done for them. Maybe advertisers are wrong. Maybe they're making a mistake being so jubilant. A new election, a new administration, a change of personnel, and they may find a new F.T.C. a harsher judge than the F. & D. A.

Still it would be hard for even a strong board to force advertisers into real honesty. Advertising is an intangible something, and you can't always put your finger on its lies. It is hard to beat the clever advertising man.

From the Pacific Coast came this: "Acme Beer is non-fattening." Other brewers complained to the F.T.C. Acme was summoned to Washington, where they demonstrated to the Commission that if you put sugar and cream in a cup of coffee, it is more fattening than a glass of Acme Beer.

The Commission said all right, but you'll have to say not "non-fattening," but "dietetically non-fattening"! Which, as you can see, makes a better ad.

Or take Shell Oil ad-talking about how often you stop and start your car, and how much gas you use up that way, and how Shell would cut that down. Well, they didn't say that any other brand would do as well. In principle, this advertising is truth, but it is misleading and no F.T.C. could stop it.

It isn't only because they think that the Federal Trade Commission will be more lenient that ad-men prefer it. By having two groups of censors, manufacturers and advertisers have to go through the same set of motions twice, and get O.K.'s twice, with all the complications and confusion that that involves. But in that confusion, in the possible disagreement between the two, advertising sees its way out. Suppose the Department of Agriculture turns down something on the label, and then the F.T.C. okays it in the ad, can you see the squabbling and the joy of the lawyers? If manufacturers can use one of the bureaus to fight the other, they can get rid of a lot of woe. Like the British Empire, they would keep their enemies busy fighting each other, while they escaped untouched.

To put the censorship of advertising in the hands of the Federal Trade Commission is a piece of administrative waste. The Food and Drug Administration has to have the organization and information to investigate products for package and labels. It would be easy to use the same information to check on advertising. If the F.T.C. is to do the job well, it will either have to consult the F. & D. A., or it will have to build up an organization of its own paralleling that of the F. & D. A. If the usual departmental ambition

operates, F.T.C. is not likely to call on the F. & D. A. for help. So the same industrial outfits which screech at each penny of extra tax are adding a handsome bill of their own to government expenses.

There is more punch in a new House bill introduced by Representative Coffee. Under the Lea and Copeland Acts the advertiser need not consult the F. & D. A. or F.T.C. in advance. The government is not supposed to make any decision until after a label is issued, or after an advertisement is printed. Then it can send out a cease and desist order. In the case of the elixir of sulfanilamide and diethylene-glycol, the public had consumed a good deal of the product before the cease and desist order could be given. That happens often, though less dangerously. Occasionally, the Department, asked for an opinion, will say, "Put it out and see what happens." In other words, these are not advisory or juridical but police departments. They can yank up an offender after he's made a mistake or committed a crime. You would think, if you didn't think long enough, that manufacturers would dislike this, that they'd prefer to get their decisions in advance before making the mistakes. Some advertisers do. But in general they'd rather pose as making a mistake, grab off a little illegal velvet, pay a small fine, and then try the same trick over again.¹

Under the Coffee bill, the manufacturer of a proprietary product would have to get a certificate of registration. To get it he would have to tell his formula and state the claims that he was going to make. Dangerous products would never be registered. Such a course would protect the public instead of punishing the manufacturer after his product

¹ See Chapter 16.

had done plenty of harm. Besides, enforcement would be easier and much cheaper.

Also, according to the Coffee bill, proprietary foods and drugs would carry on their labels statements of formula, both as to the quality and the quantity. Suppose Alka-Seltzer lists its contents without any word about quantity. Alka-Seltzer is essentially a mixture of aspirin, baking soda, and citric acid. You might assume that it is mostly baking soda with a little aspirin thrown in. But every Alka-Seltzer tablet contains $5\frac{1}{2}$ grains of aspirin, which is a big dose.¹

At the time of writing, the Coffee bill is in the House Interstate and Foreign Commerce Committee. Needless to say, manufacturers and advertisers have risen in wrath against it. The Department of Agriculture thinks highly of it, I am told, but is not pushing it because it believes it too good to have a chance of passing.

Meantime, since the passage of the Lea bill, the Federal Trade Commission has promised to be much more severe. Some advertising agencies are worried and some shrug their shoulders. But F.T.C. has already ordered Graham automobiles to cut out advertising that its oil filter will reduce oil bills by any definite percentage; has made Horlick's Malted Milk stop claims that its use unaided will reduce weight, has insisted that Lux end its ad-boasts as a reliable skin improver. Certainly the old high-binder days are gone. Advertisers will have to be either more honest or more subtle.

But advertisers are like Lastex bathing suits. They'll

¹ For a long time the labels of proprietary feed for cattle have been forced to tell what ingredients they contain and in what proportion, but cows are property and people are not.

stretch to fit. And perhaps they don't know what a lie is. N. W. Ayer & Sons is a serious and old established agency. In a piece of copy got up for newspaper use, they make the ad speak for itself. . . . "I cannot tell a lie," said the advertisement. Even if it wanted to stretch the truth just a teeny bit, that wouldn't be smart business."

It is a shock to find this staid old agency using the word "teeny," but even more of a shock to find them so innocent. Someone ought to tell them the facts of business.

APPENDIX A

A CUSTOMER used to be just a person you sold something to—"the fall guy." But in these large days of public relations, the customer has become the consumer, and everybody's worried about him. The manufacturer and the ad-man are losing sleep because maybe the consumer isn't being treated right. The automotive industry's afraid the consumer's being swindled by patent medicines, the canner wants to expose the bunk in cosmetics, the silk people fear he's going to be stuck with rayon, the rayon mills are upset because he may defeat China by buying Japanese goods.

What causes all this sudden furor, this gallant fight for the poor fall guy and the poor fall guy's wife? Quite simply, the customer has shown symptoms of lassitude, he has begun to be tired of being a zombie, a little line on a questionnaire, a swallower of undigested words. He has begun to ask, "What do you mean—tested? Certified? Who says so?" Young people especially no longer believe advertising with their old abandon.

Advertisers' first reaction, of course, was indignation. Said Frank Bracher to the Boston Ad Club: ¹

Then the good ladies swung into line and we found anti-advertising propaganda running through such powerful women's groups as the American Home Economics Association, the Association of University Women, Parent-Teachers Association,

¹ Dec. 17, 1935.

American Federation of Women's Clubs, and the American League of Women Voters. And through the teachers who are members of these organizations, anti-advertising doctrine went into schools and colleges.

Other advertisers laugh it off. Thus, Robert S. Mann, in his column in *Editor & Publisher*,

"Here's a not-so-good advertisement for Chevrolet," we told Mr. Crooker [Acting President Campbell-Ewald Agency], showing him a report on automobiles published by one of the "professional-consumer" organizations. . . .

He was not surprised and not impressed. . . . "The general public for the most part believes what big business institutions say in public about their products. The satisfied owner of a Chevrolet, or any other advertised product, objects to being told in such pamphlets that his judgment is no good, and that he has made a bad purchase. . . ."

Pride of ownership is a queer thing. It's true nobody likes to be told he's been made a fool of. But the next time that customer buys a new car, will he be quite so ready for a Chevrolet?

"Professional-consumer" is a sharp word trick,¹ but a professional consumer, that is, one who knew his business, would be a nuisance to the ad-world. The nuisance is growing and growing fast. The consumer is beginning to organize.² But he couldn't patent the word consumer or restrict it to legitimate outfits. So industry has moved in. All over the country manufacturers, chain stores, processors, have started the most spontaneous consumer leagues and

¹ Along the same line of trick words is "back to work advocate" for scab.

² Ten cents sent to the General Board of the Young Men's Christian Association will bring you an up-to-date list of genuine consumer organizations.

foundations. Usually on their boards are fine lists of names, often of people who think they're in a real consumer movement. All these spring up full-grown at birth with plenty of gold spoons.

"Kept consumer pressure groups," the Lynds (*Middletown*) call these fake outfits. "Their second-hand army of opinion," says D. A. Montgomery, enlisted under the neutral name of consumers, is directed against farmers and wage earners.¹

The kept consumer outfits are all very kind about sending speakers to schools and clubs (especially women's clubs).² Really, the women's clubs ought to look into these things and these organizations a little before they fall for charming speakers. They ought to read such bits as this from *Industrial Standardization* of July, 1937: ". . . this Consumers Education Movement is here. Eight million women are ready to be used in every manufacturer's and retailer's sale promotion plan. . . . Here is the greatest selling opportunity in our history, dumped, literally, on each advertising desk in this country—the right wing Consumers Movement!"³

Part of the kept movement is a rash of consumer magazines. It takes a little experience to know the real from the fake among these. A magazine, for instance, like *American Consumer* (formerly *National Consumer News*), leaves me a bit confused. I sent for a sample copy. At the time of writing, eight issues had come without further pay-

¹ *Survey Graphic*, April, 1938.

² Anna Steese Richardson, of the staff of the *Woman's Home Companion*, has been speaking to women's clubs for many years; she is indignant about the furor against advertisers, but began her work long before the birth of the kept consumer outfits.

³ From *Survey Graphic*, April, 1938.

ment. Its articles on the subject of cotton fabrics seem excellent. But it is for "industrial peace," with a "two-year truce" on strikes and lockouts. It contains articles by the advertising manager of Macy's and the president of Bonwit Teller's.

Some recommended consumer periodicals:

Consumers Union Report

Consumers Defender

Consumers Guide of the Department of Agriculture (free)

Services of the National Bureau of Standards of the Department of Commerce (free)

APPENDIX B

Books for the consumer:

Stuart Chase and F. J. Schlink started off the consumer fight with *Your Money's Worth*.

The Consumers Bookshelf, prepared by the Consumers Counsel Division of the Agricultural Adjustment Administration, Washington, D. C., contains much information. In addition, the following books:

Economic Problems of the Family, by Hazel Kyrk: Harper & Bros., New York, 1933.

100,000,000 Guinea Pigs, by Arthur Kallet and F. J. Schlink: Vanguard Press, New York, 1932.

American Chamber of Horrors, by Ruth de Forest Lamb: Farrar & Rinehart, New York, 1936.

Counterfeit, by Arthur Kallet: Vanguard Press, New York, 1935.

How to Spend Money, by Ruth Brindze: Vanguard Press, New York, 1935.

40,000,000 Guinea Pig Children, by Rachel Lynn Palmer and Isadore M. Alpher: Vanguard Press, 1937.

The Education of the Consumer, by Henry Harap; Macmillan Company, New York, 1924.

Standardization of Consumer Goods, by Jessie V. Coles: Ronald Press Co., New York, 1932.

Nostrums and Quackery, Vol. III, by Arthur J. Cramp: American Medical Association, 1936.

Paying Through the Teeth, by Bissell B. Palmer, Vanguard Press, 1935.

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